THE TIMES

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Top independent school abandons new-look A levels

By John O'Leary
Education Editor

ONE of Britain's leading independent schools has told parents that it intends to abandon A levels, just two days before the Government announces a controversial reform of the sixth-form curriculum.

Sevenoaks School in Kent, the top co-educational school in last year's *Times* examination tables, is to offer only the International Baccalaureate (IB) to new entrants from next year. Tommy Cookson, the Headmaster, said the qualification had proved to be a better "yardstick of excellence" than A level.

Sevenoaks's decision will be an embarrassment for ministers at a time when their A-level reforms are certain to face criticism from left and right. Baroness Blackstone, the Education Minister, is to confirm tomorrow plans to offer five subjects in the sixth form, and new courses in the "key skills" of information technology, numeracy and communication.

The package will clear the way for the spread of modular A levels — which examine students at up to six stages during their course — while guaranteeing a traditionally-examined alternative in all subjects.

Traditionalists believe that the changes will sacrifice depth for breadth of study, while the progressive lobby argues that the changes do too little to encourage students to mix arts and sciences, or academic and vocational subjects.

The IB, which Sevenoaks has offered as an alternative to A levels since 1977, requires candidates to take six subjects from different areas of the curriculum, three of which are pursued to Higher Level. Students also take a course on the theory of knowledge, are separately assessed on creativity, action and service, and have to write a 4,000-word extended essay.

Designed in the 1960s as an international qualification, the IB is now taken by 35,000 students a year in 100 countries. But its expansion has been limited in Britain, partly because of parents' perceived preference for A levels and the cost of offering more than one type of academic qualification.

Sevenoaks decided to drop A levels when, for the first time, those taking the IB represented a majority of the sixth-form. Mr Cookson said: "After 20 years of running IB courses in parallel with A level, we now have decided to opt for what we consider the better alternative. With the future shape of A levels under review, we have chosen to adhere to a known yardstick of excellence."

Pupils already at the school, where boarding fees are £14,000 a year, will continue to be offered A level. But Graham Lacey, the head of sixth-form, said the courses could be phased out before 2005 if demand dried up as expected.

In a letter to parents, Mr Cookson said that earlier fears that the IB would be unacceptable to medical schools and leading universities had been overcome. Of the school's 40 places at Oxford and Cambridge last year, 24 went to IB candidates.

The school believes that the IB differentiates more clearly between the many sixth-formers who would achieve three top-grade A levels. In the past ten years, only two IB candidates have achieved the maximum 45 points.

Other independent schools are also worried by the direction of A-level reforms. James Sabben-Clare, the Headmaster of Winchester College, has already said that his school might consider switching to the IB if the changes prove unsatisfactory.

Mr Sabben-Clare, the chairman of the Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference which represents the leading 230 independent schools, was worried that continued grade inflation at A level would devalue the results of high achievers.

And Professor Alan Smithers, the head of Liverpool University's Centre for Education and Employment Research, said that other selective schools might follow suit. "I think the Government was wise to be cautious in its reform, but it is good for schools to have another option. It helps to keep all qualifications up to the mark."

Ministers take cover, page 4



"No A levels? So you must be an old Sevenoaks boy"

Blair opposes pay-offs for eurocrats

By Philip Webster and Charles Bremner

NO European Commissioner found guilty of fraud or misconduct should receive a pay-off, Tony Blair and William Hague agreed yesterday.

Outgoing Commissioners could receive payouts worth as much as £300,000, but the Tory leader said that the money should not go to those "forced to resign in disgrace".

And the Prime Minister told MPs: "In respect of the pay-offs, of course, if someone is guilty of fraud or misconduct, those will not apply."

The Government also welcomed Jacques Santer's decision to abandon his fight to stay in office. In a statement, the 20 Commissioners said: "We have resigned and have no desire or intention of remaining in office a moment longer than we have to."

It called for the appointment of a new executive "without delay" and said it would carry on running basic EU business until then.

Mr Blair, who spoke to several EU leaders yesterday about the appointment of Mr Santer's successor, wants the choice to be made as swiftly as possible. There is certain to be lengthy discussion at next week's Berlin summit and the appointment could come at an informal gathering of EU leaders soon afterwards.

But two of the rumoured candidates yesterday ruled themselves out. Antonio Guterres, the Portugues Prime Minister who is said to be backed by Mr Blair, said he was "totally unavailable". Wim Kok, the Dutch Prime Minister, said he did not want the job and favoured a southern candidate.

This strengthened speculation over Romano Prodi, the former Italian Prime Minister. Javier Solana, the Spanish chief of Nato, said he was too busy to think about an EU job.

Mr Blair was also forced to deflect a combined and unprecedented call from Tony Benn and John Major for the appointment of British Commissioners to be approved by Parliament.

Mr Hague took up the case in Question Time, suggesting that this was an appropriate time to change existing procedures and allow the Commons a say. But Mr Blair said that the existing system was the best.

In yesterday's confusion over how to redeem the EU executive, several Commissioners made clear that they expected to stay on in a new interim administration, possibly as President.

A potential in-house saviour emerged in the shape of Karel van Miert, the Belgian Commissioner, who appeared to put himself forward as a candidate when he replaced Mr Santer as chief damage controller for the Commissioners.

Mr van Miert, a widely respected figure, joined a chorus of Commissioners airing their anger over being forced to carry a collective can for the failures of Mr Santer and Edith Cresson, the French Commissioner.

"The great majority of my colleagues were convinced that Cresson should have been the subject for debate, and not the resignation of all of us," he said.

The Liberal group, the third force in the EU Parliament, called last night for Sir Leon Brittan, the British Commission vice-president, to be given the post of caretaker president immediately. His mandate should be "to clean up the toilet" of the EU executive, according to Bo Jensen, the Liberal secretary-general.

While London pressed for emergency action, Bonn, Paris and other capitals made clear the complex procedure for putting in place even an interim team could take weeks.

A consensus seems to have emerged among the EU governments on the need for a fully empowered interim Commission, which would hold office until January, when a new team is due to start a five-year term. The thinking is that the president of this Commission could then carry on in office, along with much of the outgoing team.

Meanwhile, the the chaos in Brussels deepened with the start of a strike by staff at the Council of Ministers over what they see as the crooked way in which national civil servants are being given posts in the EU bureaucracy.

EU in crisis, pages 15-17
Anatole Kaletsky, page 24
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Leading article, page 25

HUGH ROUTLEDGE



The Queen Mother discussing the chances of her horse Easter Ross with the jockey Mick Fitzgerald at Cheltenham yesterday. He fell at the second fence. Earlier, Fitzgerald won the Queen Mother Champion Chase on Call Equiname. Reports, pages 52, 53

Private hospital inquiry to curb health scandals

By Jill Sherman, Chief Political Correspondent

MEDICAL standards in Britain's 300 private hospitals are to be investigated and monitored for the first time under a Government proposal to stop health scandals.

Frank Dobson, the Health Secretary, is planning to set up an independent inspectorate to regulate private hospitals and publish league tables comparing medical performance and death rates.

The public would be able to compare private hospitals against NHS hospitals to discover the best and worst treatment. They may also get access to information about individual doctors who work both in the NHS and the private sector.

The health department will shortly publish a consultation paper with options for regulating care in the independent sector, with legislation expected next year.

The move follows medical scandals in both the NHS and the private sector. Last September Robert Ledward, a gynaecologist, was struck off the medical register after being accused of injuring 400 women under his care in both private and NHS hospitals. In a separate case, Hadassa Carmon was given the all clear three times by BUPA breast screening at Gatwick Park in 1992, but later developed cancer. She won £143,000 in an out-of-court settlement. The case is being considered by the all-party Commons Health Committee which is taking evidence on whether independent health care should be regulated.

About 800,000 operations are performed annually in private hospitals and more than 17,000 doctors do some private work. As many as 25 per cent of routine waiting list operations such as hip and knee replacements are performed privately.

Twelve million people either have private health insurance or pay for treatment in private hospitals, but there is no regulation of medical standards.

Under the 1984 Act covering nursing homes, health authori

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Dunblane policewomen seek £800,000 damages

By Shirley English

TWO policewomen who claim they suffered psychological trauma after the Dunblane massacre are suing their force for £400,000 each.

The women allege that they were denied adequate counselling after the shootings four years ago when 16 primary schoolchildren and their teacher died. Writs were served last week on Chief Constable William Wilson of Central Scotland Police and the claims will be lodged with the Court of Session in Edinburgh.

But families of the children who died, community leaders and police reacted with anger to the claims, which far exceed the compensation paid to relatives of the victims. John MacLaren, whose five-year-old granddaughter Megan Turner was killed by Thomas Hamilton, said: "These officers were just doing their job. I would imagine that for anyone who was in the gym it would have been just awful, a horrendous experience, but what about the rest of us? I lost my granddaughter. You just have to get on with your life."

Charlie Clydesdale, 42, who lost his daughter Victoria and had to identify her body yet has been denied compensation by the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board, said: "How can they justify this? I lost a child. I had to identify my own wee girl just after it happened. So if I cannot get compensation for the things I have suffered, how on earth can two police officers who stood outside the school gates have the right to ask for nearly half a million pounds?"

Ian Watson, a solicitor for the policewomen, aged 26 and 30, said that both had played a "significant role" in policing the tragedy, arriving at the school almost immediately after the killings. One was posted at the school gates to deal with frantic parents and both were later sent to the gymnasium where the dead and injured were being identified.

It is understood that afterwards they were given an hour of counselling and sent back to work. One has retired on medical grounds and the other is on sick leave.

Central Scotland Police declined to comment on the writs, but a number of officers privately condemned the claims, saying they had agreed not to seek damages in view of the far greater trauma suffered by relatives.

The controversy echoes that surrounding the Hillsborough disaster, which saw 14 South Yorkshire policemen awarded £1.2 million for psychiatric damage. Five law lords later blocked payments to other officers, saying it was unfair for them to receive compensation when some of the bereaved received nothing.

Weary balloonists heading home

By Helen Rumbelow

THE British and Swiss pilots who are the closest in history to flying around the world in a balloon are racing towards the finish line with dwindling fuel and heat.

Brian Jones, 51, was said to be mentally and physically exhausted as the *Breitling Orbiter 3* flew over Belize last night, in its 17th day and completing its 20,000th mile.

He and Bertrand Piccard, 41, must cross the same longitude twice to win the $1 million prize offered by Anheuser Busch, the makers of Budweiser beer. But of far greater importance is achieving the last great aviation challenge. On current weather predictions they hope to reach this latitude, 9.27 degrees west, somewhere over north-west Africa at around 6pm on Saturday.

After breaking the long-distance record on Monday, the pair had to waste precious propane to dodge clouds over Mexico. Now they are finding it difficult to keep their spirits up after the disappointment of hitting slow wind yesterday.

Today they plan to cruise at 34,000ft over Jamaica, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic, before their last great hurdle, the Atlantic, on Friday. They aim to hit a fast jet stream that will speed them along at 85mph, but they cannot afford any deviation or bad weather.

Both have colds, neither is sleeping or eating well, and yesterday one of the balloon's heaters broke down. They were trying to "hang tough" for the next three days, said Mr Jones's wife, Joanna, at the control centre in Geneva.

Blair gets twisters in a nick as Prescott adopts sign language

MATTHEW PARRIS

POLITICAL SKETCH

Blony Tair must be under pressure. In the Couse of Hommons the strain showed: the Mime Prinister stumbled into a series of slerbal vips. I blame Europe.

At first we thought he had lapsed into Latin. Answering the first question (from a Tory: about the Budget) an animated Mr Blair insisted there had been "*nem cat tucks*".

Amid a general scratching of heads, he took another run. "Net tax cuts," Blair explained. Some of us preferred the first version. A Budget with cat tucks sounds fun. The PM's speechwriters made a mental note: avoid fast buck or fiscal luck in the future texts.

Blair was recovering from this tumble when he slipped again. Asked about the murder in Northern Ireland of Rosemary Nelson, the Prime Minister declared that no effort would be spared in the hint for her . . . and he stopped just short of kullers, and got back on track: hunt for the killers. Never mind. It could have been much worse. Perhaps aware how much worse, Blair did not try a second version, but left the 'hint' for *Hansard* to correct.

By now the affliction was spreading. So keen was Geraint Davies (Lab, Croydon Central) to get the French "on" sound into his pronounciation of Santer that he leapt forward with a question about Jock Santer.

MPs giggled. Has a new mood of Presbyterian thrift overtaken Brussels already? Who next in the Celtic onslaught? Liam Brittan?

The House was distracted from its fit of Spoonerism by Paddy Ashdown who told Blair that now Jock — sorry, Jacques — had gone, what was lacking was leadership. No organisation should be left "leaderless". How true. It must be dreadful to be part of a gang whose leader is standing down, with confusion reigning about who will take over. It creates a vacuum.

Tories pointed fingers at Mr Ashdown and squealed "You! You!" Were they recommending him for the Commission Presidency — replacing Jock with Paddy?

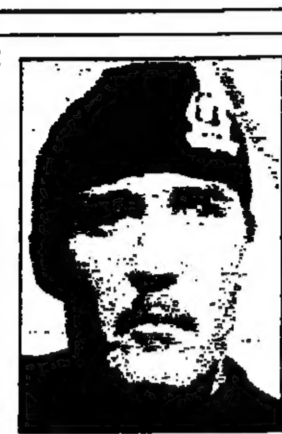
By now Mr Blair was limbering up for his next spat with the English language.

Invited by Ken Purchase (Lab, Wolverhampton NE) to offer some thoughts on poverty and housing benefit, the Prime Minister wanted to tell us that many people were coming into "the Labour market".

Unfortunately he said "the Labour Party", from which there has been a notable egress since the election. He failed to correct this one, too. And never corrected his fourth slip.

John Wilkinson (C, Ruislip Northwood) told Blair of his concern that the tax burden on the self-employed had been increased. Blair, insisting there had been tax cuts not tax hikes, managed to avoid "cat tucks not hax tikes" but stumbled over "entry fee" and said "enty free" instead. This may explain the conflict between Mr Blair and William Hague about whether what we pay to the Exchequer is rising or falling. Fee and free are not the same thing at all, as Cherie will remind him.

John Prescott, himself no stranger to the verbal tangle, managed to say more, yesterday — without speaking. The suntanned Deputy Prime Minister fresh back (said William Hague) from "chasing angel fish around a coral reef" in the Maldives, started the session with a V-sign at the Tory front bench. Hard to mistake that.



Curry: fell out with mainstream loyalists

Loyalists blamed for latest killing

By Martin Fletcher

NORTHERN Ireland suffered its second paramilitary murder in three days yesterday when a prominent loyalist was shot dead in the heart of Belfast's Protestant Shankill Road area.

Police said Frankie Curry, 46, a former Red Hand Commando leader who had fallen out with mainstream loyalism, was almost certainly killed by fellow loyalists and not by republicans retaliating for Monday's car-bomb murder of Rosemary Nelson.

The Red Hand Defenders, the loyalist splinter group which claimed responsibility for Mrs Nelson's death, blamed the Ulster Volunteer Force. It threatened retaliation, though it denied Curry was an RHD member.



Clinton calls for a new Ulster accord

From Damian Whitworth in Washington

PRESIDENT CLINTON was putting pressure on Northern Ireland leaders last night to break the deadlock over decommissioning of terrorist arms and push the peace process forward.

In separate meetings at the White House with David Trimble, the First Minister and Ulster Unionist leader, and Gerry Adams, president of Sinn Fein, the President was seeking to persuade them to overcome their differences even as each reiterated that disarming the IRA was still the major sticking point.

Mr Trimble said the IRA's refusal to begin disarming prevented Sinn Fein from taking part in the power-sharing executive to run the Province. But he insisted that the republicans could ensure that the IRA began disarming.

"It is not a question of whether, but a question of when," he said before his St Patrick's Day meeting at the Oval Office. He said he remained confident that the peace process was not in danger.

"I think it is going to work. We have big problems in the short term with the paramilitaries, but there is no alternative. Even if we get stalled I think it will only be temporary," he said.

However, Mr Adams ruled out an IRA handover of weapons. "The demands he is making of me? I can't deliver those. He knows that. You know that. Everybody knows that." He added: "The President knows as well as Mr Trimble that IRA (arms) decommissioning is not a precondition for Sinn Fein to hold ministerial office."



President Clinton talking to Bertie Ahern yesterday

His comments contrasted sharply with those of Mo Mowlam, the Northern Ireland Secretary, who said on Tuesday that republicans and unionists were within a "hair's breadth" of reaching a solution on the stalled peace process. Mr Adams said that the car-bomb killing of Rosemary Nelson, the prominent Catholic human rights lawyer, had worsened the crisis.

"The situation here in Washington has been overshadowed by this killing. When I left to come here the sense of crisis had been deepened."

The White House said the day of meetings was intended to focus on "encouragement, not negotiations," and Mr Trimble said he expected Mr Clinton to apply "discreet" pressure. But he added that he believed "the President has some favours to call in," referring to the visa he had granted to Mr Adams in 1995 which helped to get the peace process moving.

The Government has given the parties until Good Friday to break the impasse or face the collapse of the peace process.

President Clinton gave warning that "enemies of peace are still rearing their heads in the Northern Ireland peace process" and he encouraged all those involved to lift their sights above the short-term difficulties. "They must see the distant horizon when children will grow up in Northern Ireland and not even remember how it used to be."

Speaking in the White House rose garden after Bertie Ahern, the Irish Prime Minister, had presented him with a bowl of shamrocks, he said that both sides must work together to implement the Good Friday accord.

"The parties must resolve their differences and to do that they have to have the same spirit of co-operation and trust that led to the first agreement."

Earlier all sides had attended the annual St Patrick's Day lunch hosted by the Speaker on Capitol Hill. An American-Ireland fund dinner in honour of Senator Ted Kennedy on Tuesday night had been notable for the way that a point was made of welcoming Irish Unionists.

"It is often forgotten that more than half of the 44 million Americans of Irish descent are Protestant. To the Unionists in Northern Ireland we say that we are your brothers and sisters, not your enemies. The vast majority of Irish Catholics in America bear you no illwill. Our hope is that as your ancestors did for America, you will help to lead the way to peace in Northern Ireland," Mr Kennedy said.

George Mitchell, the former Senator who chaired the peace talks, added: "We must be understanding, we must be patient, we must be tolerant, but we must also be insistent as we say to those leaders: 'You have done much, but you must do more'."

Books, page 42

CHRIS HARRIS



The statue of Queen Victoria is given appropriate St Patrick's Day headgear in Belfast yesterday

NEWS IN BRIEF

Record of railways 'is much worse'

One in five trains is cancelled or seriously delayed on some of Britain's busiest routes, according to new figures by passenger groups that suggest disruption is far more widespread than previously thought. More than 500,000 trains were cancelled or seriously delayed in 1998, suggesting that one journey in ten is disrupted. On long-distance routes, such as Virgin's West Coast and Cross Country lines, and Great Western, the proportion rises to more than one in five.

The disclosure is included in statistics that show, for the first time, the state of the railways across all services, rather than those selected for official figures. Government figures are based mainly on peak-time journeys.

Bad books

The public spending watchdog has exposed the poor quality of accounting in Government departments in a report to MPs. A fifth of all departments could not even manage to complete their annual accounts on time last year — yet five years ago just 1 per cent handed in late accounts.

Arson accused

A man will appear in a London court today charged with the murder of seven members of a family in an arson attack on a house in Chingford, Essex, last week. Scotland Yard detectives have ordered tight security around the identity of the man until he appears in court for fear of reprisals.

Jail gun find

Police were last night investigating how a handgun, ammunition and flak jacket were dumped outside a big London jail. The badly corroded weapon and other equipment were found on land between the perimeter fence and road outside Wormwood Scrubs prison in West London.

Terror extension

Anti-terrorist detectives were granted another 48 hours to continue questioning the Muslim cleric Abu Hamza al-Masri and two other men arrested on Monday in dawn raids in west Londonfollowing allegations by Yemen of involvement in the kidnap of 40 Westerners.

Two trapped

Two eco-campaigners in tunnels under the old Crystal Palace site in South London are at the centre of a rescue operation after becoming trapped. The chamber in which Animal — Ellenor Hutson, 18, — and Ken have been living for 14 days has subsided, leaving the metal gate impassable.

Straw demands action over passport chaos

By Richard Ford, Home Correspondent

JACK STRAW held crisis talks yesterday over the immigration department chaos that has led to hundreds of people being trapped in Britain.

The Home Secretary called in Siemens Business Services, the computer firm at the centre of the problem to demand an action plan within a week to deal with the delays, which have resulted from a mass of travel documents being lost.

Mr Straw acted after the immigration and nationality department admitted that the delays in dealing with travel documents would continue for several more months. Ministers had previously said the problems would be overcome by Easter.

Thousands of people, including international businessmen, foreigners living in the UK and people requiring work permits, have suffered months-long delays at the Immigration and Nationality Directorate at Croydon in south London. Many have been told that their best option is to go to their own high commission or embassy to order new passports.

Mr Straw is furious at the delays and failures in implementing new working practices and in introducing a new computer system to deal with immigration and asylum applications.

The chaos at the directorate has been caused by the relocation of 1,000 staff from Lunar House to an office in the nearby Whitgift Centre, and compounded by the new work practices and computer system. Officials have been forced to draft in extra staff to deal with up to 16,000 pieces of unopened mail and additional facsimile machines have been installed as thousands of angry foreigners besiege the directorate seeking information about their travel documents.

One Australian man, who sent his passport to the directorate to renew his residency permit, spent three weeks phoning the centre before getting through to an official. He was then told that it could take eight months to find his passport, which was accompanied by mortgage documents, references and bank statements to indicate he would not burden the state.

A Japanese woman was unable to attend her grandparents' funerals because her passport has been lost since last September.

Mike O'Brien, the Immigration Minister, who decided on the "big bang" of moving offices, retraining staff and computerisation all at once, said that the £70 million computerisation contract awarded to Siemens Business Services in 1996 was unrealistic and over ambitious.

A spokeswoman for Siemens Business Services refused to discuss the talks at the Home Office.

Inquiry to halt hospital scandals

Continued from page 1

have had powers to inspect private and state homes and independent hospitals.

But the focus has been on long term nursing care and there has been no assessment of private medical care. It does not cover invididual doctors and it does not have any appropriate sanctions.

The recent white paper on social services proposed 8 new regional commissions which would inspect nursing homes in both sectors but it will not apply to private acute hospitals. Mr Dobson is now considering setting up a separate inspectorate or commission to cover this anomoly.

Health department sources said the Government wanted to await the outcome of the select committee's report and its own consultation exercise before taking further action. "The government recognises the concern that exists regarding the regulatory framework for hospitals and clinics in the private sector and we will shortly be consulting widely on future regulatory systems," said a spokesman.

But the government has been under mounting pressure from both the Tories and the private sector to extend regulation. Tonight the Lords will debate a Conservative amendment to the NHS bill which scraps GP fundholding, calling for greater regulation of the private sector. The Tories want the Health Service Bill to extend clinical assessment from the NHS to the private sector.

The Tories are pressing the government to expand the remit of the Commission for Health Improvement, which is being set up in the Bill, which will have the power to make spot checks on clinical procedures, to inspect and enter NHS hospitals and to carry out quality reviews.

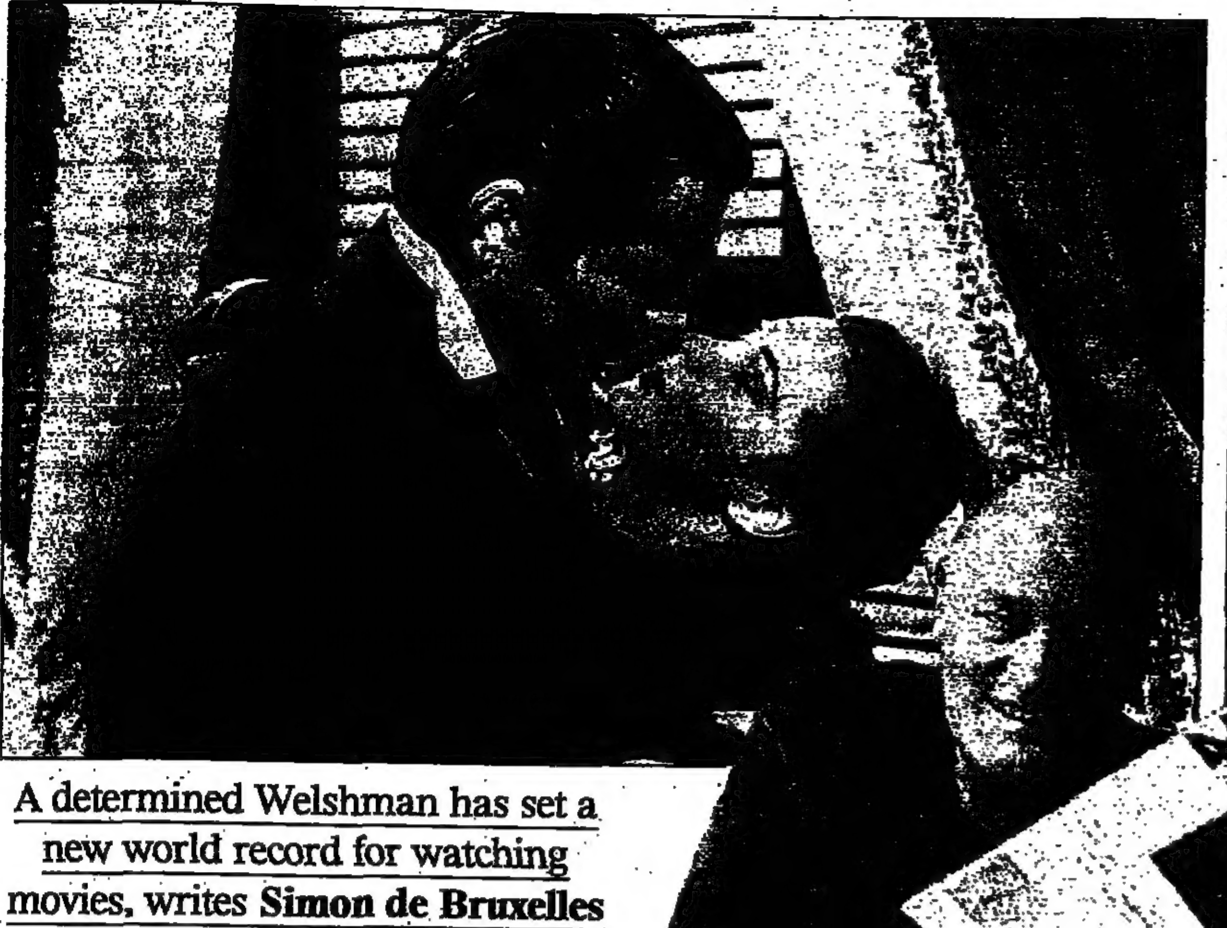
Having defeated the Government on one admendment earlier this week, the Tories are hoping for another victory. "At present patients using the private sector do not have the same safeguards of regulation that those who use the health service are entitled to," said a Tory spokesman.

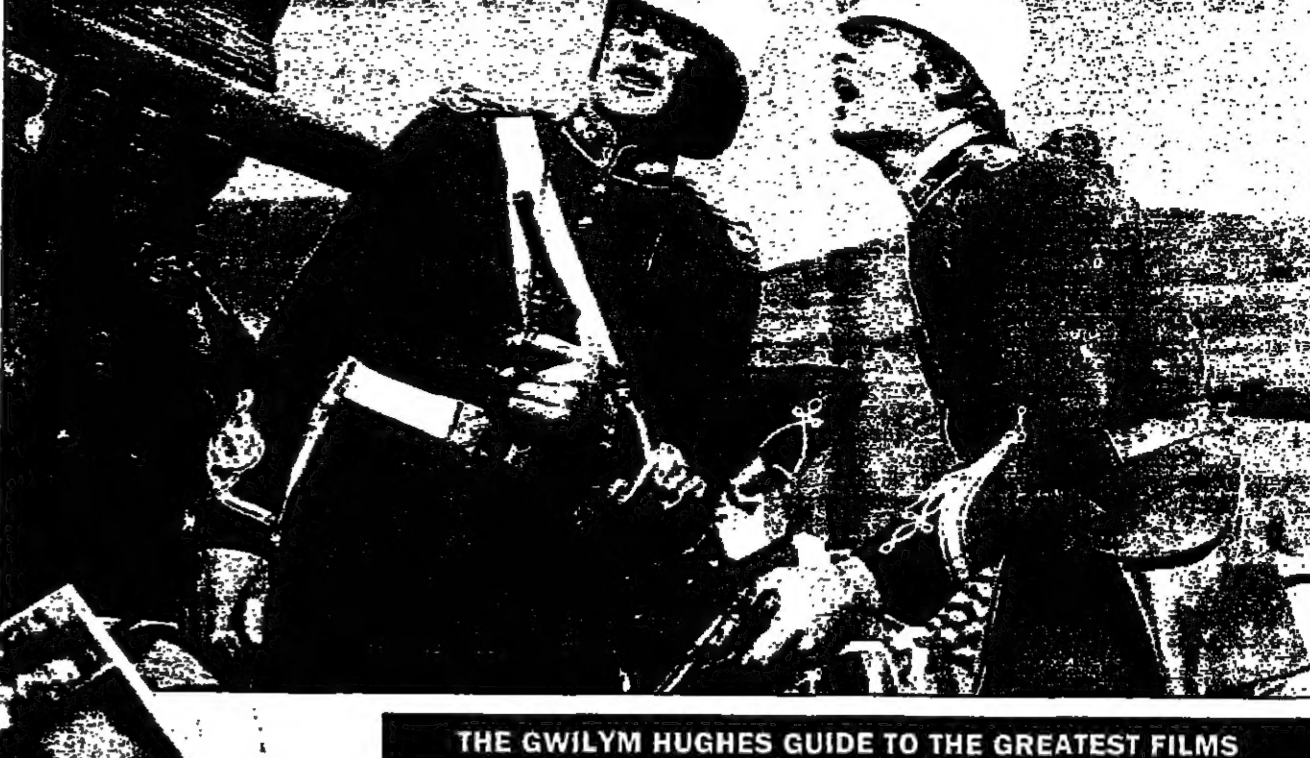
BUPA, Britain's largest private health insurance company is also keen for a national inspectorate for the independent sector and supports the publication of league tables. A spokeswoman for BUPA said that the company would call for greater regulation when it gives oral evidence to the health committee next Thursday. It argues that an insectorate would also help root out poor standards in small private clinics set up by doctors to minor operations.

Ledward inquiry, page 8



24,000 films: a life in celluloid







Gwilym Hughes with some of his film books. His favourite films include *Gone With The Wind*, above left, and *Zulu*. He said: "I want to be entertained"

A determined Welshman has set a new world record for watching movies, writes **Simon de Bruxelles**

HE DOES not like horror, violence or bad language, so Gwilym Hughes's place in cinema history is all the more impressive. He has just watched his 24,000th film, and nobody in the world can beat that.

It is getting harder for the greatest of all movie buffs to see films as they were intended. He has kept notes on every movie he has seen since the age of seven, and for years he visited the cinema at least ten times a week, but since his local fleapit closed in mid-Wales, he has settled instead for a black-and-white television in a bedroom while his wife watches soap operas on the colour set downstairs.

Not for the world's most avid film fan the luxury of digital, cable or widescreen television. Mr Hughes, 53, cannot even get Channel 5 on his portable and has to watch S4C, the Welsh language version of Channel 4. These drawbacks have not stopped him watching at least 18 films a week, though, for the latest blockbusters, he has to wait until they arrive in his local video store. "The nearest cinemas is about 20 miles away and I don't drive, so it depends if a mate is going or not," he said. "The last film I saw there was *Saving Private Ryan*, which was superb."

The retired painter and decorator has an assured place in *The Guinness Book of Records*. He expects to reach a total of 25,000 by April next year. But he says: "I am an old-fashioned film fan, I don't like all this violence and bad language you get in the cinema nowadays.

"I haven't seen any horror movies, not even *The Exorcist*. Who wants to go to the cinema to see film of a girl vomiting, I ask you? I want to watch a film to be entertained not be sickened by it. I don't like the way horror films these days are full of death, destruction and nightmares." He has never seen a film by Quentin Tarantino.

Mr Hughes caught the film bug in hospital as a child when he saw *King Solomon's Mines* while recuperating from an operation. He said: "It has stayed with me all my life. I've never been bored and I still watch every film with great keenness. Once the titles start rolling, I'm completely hooked. I've seen more of life than most people even though I have not travelled very far."

As a student he took time off between lectures to pop into the local cinema and on one memorable day, recorded for posterity in his notebook, he saw eight films in different cinemas in Coventry.

In the 1970s, he was secretary of the Dolgellau Film Club. Members would club together to hire the latest art release from London. Since the club folded shortly after the introduction of video players, his hobby has become a solitary pursuit.

He first won his place in *The Guinness Book of Records* when he heard someone say on the radio that it contained very few Welsh entries. National pride at stake, he went immediately to the local bookshop to browse through a copy. Knowing he was never likely to break the 100 metres record or find the world's biggest diamond, he turned straight to the section on cinema. There it recorded that Albert E. van Schmus, the American film censor from 1949 to 1982, had seen more movies than anyone else in history. Van Schmus may have watched 16,945 films.

Mr Hughes had a record of the 20,000 films he had seen in more than 100 notebooks and he took the American's place in the record book in 1992. His new record will appear in the next edition. He does not want to be crowned the King of the Couch Potatoes and says he has plenty of time in his life for other interests. He is a member of 12 local organisations, is an enthusiastic bowls player, and he finds time occasionally to join his wife, Eirlys, for an episode of *EastEnders*.

He was forced to give up work through ill-health 15 years ago, a legacy of hip problems he had as a child. He said: "I've spent around four years of my life in hospital so I've also had a lot of time to watch films on television."

THE GWILYM HUGHES GUIDE TO THE GREATEST FILMS

Lawrence of Arabia — "I love David Lean. To me he was the master. To work in that temperature and to get so much remarkable footage; even the music was superb."

Gone with the Wind — "That's a classic, isn't it, but there a sadness too, as the author died penniless. The scene that really gets me is where Vivien Leigh is running through an orchard and there's blossom everywhere."

Empire of the Sun — "There's a beautiful haunting Welsh air in it, but I also like the lad's image of the war through his eyes. He was too young to realise the danger."

Schindler's List — "It's beyond imagination how people could do such things to their fellow human beings. How Spielberg used the black-and-white and the colour film — it's so effective."

Zulu — "The Welsh Borderers' finest hour. Mr Morris, manager of the Dolgellau Plaza, wrote an open letter to the public urging them to see it because it's part of Welsh history."

BARRY NORMAN'S TWO YEARS IN FRONT OF THE SCREEN

OF SOME 235,000 films made in the history of cinema, the critic Barry Norman claims to have seen more than 12,000 — the estimated equivalent of two years in a cinema (Dalya Alberge writes).

James Ferman, the former director of the British Board of Film Classification, has no idea of his record and "couldn't begin to estimate", but Sir Sydney Samuelson, the first British Film Commissioner, who is now senior consultant to the British Film Commission, believes he has seen about 3,000.

He saw some 600 in his first two years in the business. "I used to be cinema projectionist," he recalled. "That's how I started. When I was 14 I was a rewind boy at the local cinema, which showed six feature films a week. That means that I saw 300 a year — during my first year's work, when I was 14 and 15, that means I saw 600." He has never counted the films and can only estimate the total. He picks out as a favourite David Lean's *Lawrence of Arabia*, "which I think is cinema at its very best". He said: "David Lean was the greatest storyteller of cinema of all time." Another favourite is *Cinema Paradiso*, which is "exactly like my own story".

Among films he has most disliked is *Reservoir Dogs*. "Some say it is a most brilliant, outstanding movie. I just thought it shouldn't be shown. I'm old-fashioned on these things, but, when I pick out the worst, I mean the worst expience for me. I can't stand explicit violence."

The critic David Robinson, whose career began some 40 years ago, said he must have averaged 250 a year. "I put it conservatively at 10,000 — and I don't remember them all. The awful ones I've forgotten and the brilliant ones are too numerous to pick out."

Morris and Noakes make a comeback with the animals

By Carol Midgley
Media Correspondent



Morris and a young friend appearing in *Animal Magic*

TWO veterans from the golden age of BBC children's television are to make a comeback on ITV. Johnny Morris, the *Animal Magic* presenter with the zoo animal "voices", and the *Blue Peter* star John Noakes, famed for his Border Collie, Shep, are to feature in new animal shows.

ITV is also to screen a modern version of *The Family*, the first fly-on-the-wall "docusoap". In 1974 it was the Wilkins family of Reading. Next month it will be the turn of the Henrys, a mixed race family from Leeds chosen to embody the "quintessential British family of the late 1990s".

Morris, 82, will revive his animal characters in a new series, *Wild Thing*, on children's ITV. Speaking from his farm home in Berkshire, he said: "My sort of stuff is dead and buried, but they have found a lot of children like that sort of thing. Many mothers who were children when I was presenting come up to me and ask why they don't get more of my sort of programme, which was non-violent, amusing, informative and gentle. There is so much violence, and children need the comfort of an arm around their shoulder and to be reassured everything is all right."

Morris is no fan of current animal programming. In the past he has called *Pets Win Prizes* "disgusting" and *Animal Hospital* and the Channel 4 show *Pet Rescue* "exploitative". Noakes, 65, who admitted to crying when Shep died, will front *Mad About Pets*, an animal roadshow that aims to find the most talented, extraordinary and pampered pets.

Noakes has not been seen regularly on our screens since *Coast To Coast*, broadcast seven years ago, which was about his voyages on the boat on which he lives in Spain. But his voice has been heard on the Andrex lavatory paper advertisements.

A spokeswoman for LWT, makers of *Mad About Pets*, said: "He was the first person who came to mind for the job. Everyone knows him from having Shep and how much he loves animals."

For the series about the Henrys, *Family Life*, television crews spent eight months living with them. The Henrys have experienced most aspects of modern family life — divorce, illegitimacy, aspiration and academic success.

Twenty five years ago, the nation was scandalised by Margaret and Terry Wilkins allowing their daughter, Marion, to live with Tom the lodger under their roof. Their younger daughter also raised eyebrows by bringing home a black boyfriend.

Margaret and Terry later divorced, Marion left Tom and her second husband and remarried, and Heather went on to bring up four children.

The producers of ITV's new offering claim their series will chart the dramatic social changes in Britain over the past 40 years. Kay and Alf Henry, who live on the Seaforth council estate in Leeds, have been married for 37 years. Mr Henry came to Britain in 1956 from St Kitts and met Kay at a time when mixed race relationships were taboo. She went into labour on the day of their wedding.

Ben Gale, series producer, said his team had spent more than three months trying to find the right family to represent modern Britain. "We didn't go out to find a mixed race family but when we met them we knew they really did reflect British life now."

Family Life, which will be broadcast on ITV in April, was unveiled at the launch of the network's new spring and summer schedule.

INSIDE SECTION 2

Ministers take cover as A-level reform arrives

John O'Leary says reform by stealth has already lessened the currency of 'gold standard'

THE changes in the sixth-form curriculum to be announced tomorrow are being billed as the biggest since A levels were introduced but the announcement will have all the razzmatazz given to a rise in the unemployment figures.

In contrast to this week's mathematics initiative, there will be no sign of the Prime Minister, no celebrity cheerleaders. The news is to be released on the day normally devoted to ministerial visits to constituencies and spin-doctors will be hoping that a critical report on Hackney education authority will distract attention.

The explanation for this low profile is that the Government expects brickbats from all sides. Traditionalists will claim that the move to five subjects in the sixth-form amounts to "dumbing down": progressives will argue that the reforms do not go far enough; and schools will complain of the added pressure on their budgets and timetables.

In reality, A level has been reformed by stealth over more than a decade. The gradual shift to modular courses, allowing pupils to take mini-exams as they complete each section of the course, has changed the "gold standard" beyond recognition. Pass rates have soared and competition for the best grades has seen the rise of "soft" subjects such as media studies and sport, with an accompanying decline in traditional subjects such as classics.

The impact of the latest reform, which will guarantee traditional syllabuses in all subjects, is likely to be much less than the drift that has gone before. Most schools will wait to see how universities react before they plan upheaval. Their fear is that admissions tutors in the best universities will continue to award places on the basis of A levels, ignoring the new tests of "key skills" and the revamped AS levels.

Baroness Blackstone's reform, like many similar proposals before it, is intended to encourage greater breadth of study. But the package is a compromise born of lengthy negotiations with Downing Street. She had hoped to move further towards the baccalaureate model, requiring students to take a variety of different types of subject, mixing the oil and water of arts and sciences.

Unlike the International Baccalaureate, which Sevenoaks School in Kent is adopting to the eventual exclusion of A levels, the new model will leave schools to decide how broad a range of subjects is studied. Students may take five, or, more likely, four, arts or science subjects if they wish, thereby postponing a decision on specialisation rather than adding breadth.

The one-year AS level will be welcomed by most schools as a more manageable way to teach extra courses than the previous two-year format. Heads remain to be convinced that universities will give full credit for the new examination but, like the results of modular tests taken during an A-level course, it will provide hard evidence of achievement for university applicants.

However, it remains to be seen whether schools and colleges will be able to go into the same degree of depth while fitting in more academic subjects and adding courses on the key skills of information technology, numeracy and communication. If highly academic schools decide that the A-level currency is being devalued, Sevenoaks may not be the last to look for an alternative.

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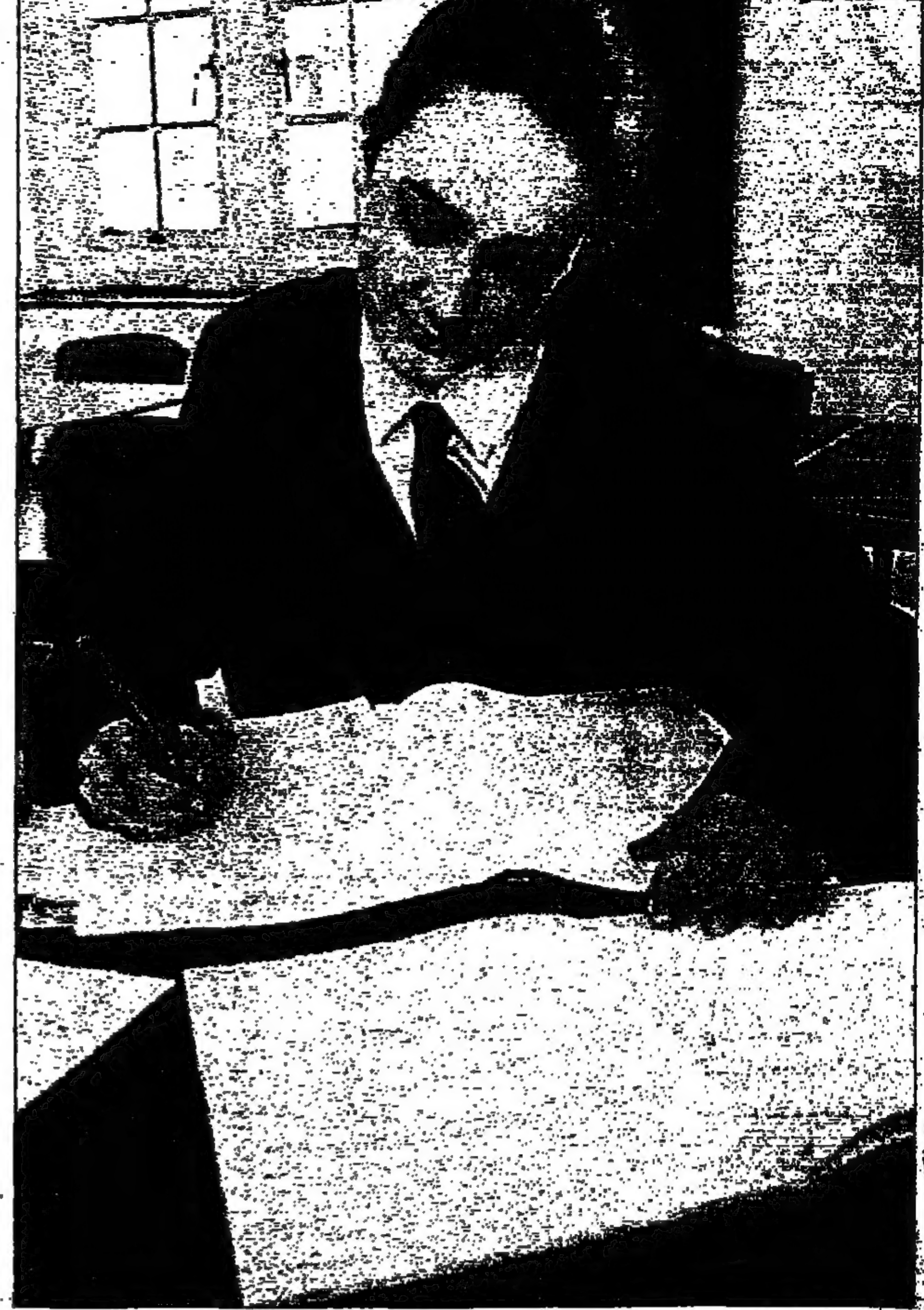
A TALE OF TWO EXAMINATIONS

INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE

- Established: 1962 as an international qualification in 20 schools. Devised by Unesco-sponsored educationists.
- Candidates: more than 35,000 in 770 schools in 95 countries.
- Reforms: none.
- Structure: six subjects from different areas of the curriculum, three taken to advanced level with one extended essay; separate course on the theory of knowledge, plus creativity, action and service requirement. Up to 20 per cent coursework, but single examinations in every subject.
- Assessment: maximum of 45 points (seven per subject, plus three for theory of knowledge and essay).
- Sample history question: "Account for the flux in relations between the superpowers between 1953 and 1963."
- Oddity: exams are taken simultaneously throughout the world, leading to 10pm start times in Hong Kong.

A LEVEL

- Established: 1951. Replaced Higher School Certificate for 40,000 teenagers.
- Candidates: more than 250,000 in Britain alone in 1998.
- Reforms: Schools Council proposals in 1966 for major and minor subjects, plus general studies, rejected. Two-year AS level introduced 1984 to broaden curriculum. In 1988 proposal for five "leaner, tougher" A levels rejected.
- Structure: six modules over two years, or traditional single examination. New system will encourage five subjects in first year, three to A level, plus "key skills" of information technology, numeracy and communication.
- Assessment: maximum ten points per A level; maximum of five per AS level; tariff for key skills to be determined.
- Sample history question: "When and for what reasons did the peace settlements of 1919-23 begin to break down?"
- Oddity: general studies has seen biggest increase in candidates, but is still not accepted by many universities.



New challenge: Amy Nolan studying baccalaureate papers at Sevenoaks School

Law lords to rule on Pinochet next week

BY FRANCES GIBB
LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

GENERAL Augusto Pinochet will learn next week if he can go home or must remain in England to face possible extradition to Spain on alleged human rights abuses.

The House of Lords confirmed yesterday that the law lords led by Sir Nicolas Browne-Wilkinson will give their final ruling next Wednesday on whether the former Chilean dictator is immune from arrest and prosecution.

The panel of seven law lords will decide whether his status as a former head of state endows him with sovereign immunity from extradition over abuses including torture, attempted murder and murder committed between 1972 and 1990.

To Russia, with love from MoD

BY MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE EDITOR

THE Ministry of Defence is investing more than £5 million to help thousands of officers to switch from military careers to civilian employment — but they are all Russian officers.

After success in finding civilian jobs for British military personnel made redundant or who retired early because of the post-Cold War cutbacks, the MoD has been offering its services to Moscow.

Yesterday another 40 retiring Russian officers completed their three-month resettlement course, sponsored by the MoD. The special deal for retiring Russian officers is part of the Government's defence diplomacy project, under which every effort is made by the British military to improve relations with their counterparts in Russia.

With the Russian Armed Forces undergoing drastic reforms — also because of the end of the Cold War — the MoD has moved in to show the redundant officers how to become bank managers, computer programmers, and even members of the Russian "tax police".

Yesterday the MoD said that, by March 2000, ministry experts would have retrained about 7,000 Russian officers.

To help to focus their efforts, the ministry men have been operating projects in seven towns across Russia — St Petersburg, Scholkovo, Kronstadt, Nizhniy Novgorod, Rostov-on-Don and Vladivostok.

The MoD is also funding English language courses for Russian officers at the English language schools of the British Council in Central Moscow and St Petersburg.

Yesterday's graduation of the latest batch of retired officers took place at the Scholkovo professional lycée on the outskirts of Moscow.

200 men face DNA tests on 1983 murder

Businessmen are on the list as detectives reopen case of strangled beautician, writes Russell Jenkins

POLICE are to conduct DNA tests on more than 200 men after reopening the files on a killing 15 years ago that became known as the "Beauty in the Bath" murder. Detectives hope that advances in forensic technology will finally help them to solve the murder of Cynthia Bolshaw, a beautician who was left lying face down in her bath, wearing only a necklace and earrings.

Prominent businessmen in the Chester area are among the men whose names appeared in the pocket diaries of the 50-year-old divorcée, strangled apparently after entertaining a lover. Results of the tests from mouth swabs will be checked against a genetic profile garnered from forensic science evidence that has lain undisturbed in a laboratory.

Superintendent David Smith, of Merseyside Police, said: "There has been a worried person out there. We want that person to look to his conscience and provide an explanation. This is not going to go away."

Mrs Bolshaw was a cosmetics consultant at the Christian Dior counter at Browns, a department store in Chester. After work on Saturday, October 8, 1983, she drove home to The Wirral in her red Toyota Corolla, dropping off a friend in Neston. She had spoken of spending a quiet evening at home with a bottle of wine at her two-bedroom bungalow in Buffs Lane, a sought-after area of Heswall. She was due to spend Sunday with her newly married son, then a navigator based at RAF Bawtry, near Doncaster, and his young bride.


Cynthia Bolshaw: found strangled in her bath

It is thought that she cooked a supper of fish. At about 9pm, a schoolboy at a nearby bus stop noticed the curtains being drawn. At some point in the evening, she is believed to have entertained somebody in the house. Evidence suggested that she drank brandy and sherry with her visitor. Reports at the time suggested that she had sex shortly before being killed, but Mr Smith refused to confirm this.

When her sister and brother-in-law visited the following day, they discovered that the back door was open. Her work clothes were piled neatly on the bed. Mrs Bolshaw was lying dead in the bath. She had apparently been dragged from the bedroom, where the killer had strangled her with his hands. The killer used her car to make his escape. It was discovered parked in an entrance to a field five miles away on the A540 to Chester. Five days later, some of her jewellery, including a 22-carat gold wishbone ring, was discovered wrapped in a nylon stocking in a telephone box in Romiley, Greater Manchester.

At the time, detectives poured over 14 meticulous diaries, interviewing boyfriends at length. Interpol inquiries were made as far as Uganda, Tokyo, Dubai and New York.

Five officers have been allotted to the investigation which will mean a re-examination of as many as 1,200 people, Mr Smith said: "As we eliminate people, we should be able to get closer to the killer."

Client wins claim against lawyers

By Frances Gibb, Legal Correspondent

AN ENGINEER who refused to pay a £1,800 legal bill when he found he had been advised by a non-lawyer won a test ruling in the Court of Appeal yesterday.

Lord Justice Shiemann ruled that Stuart Pilbrow does not have to pay his legal bill because the firm of solicitors did not inform him that his affairs were being handled by a non-lawyer.

Mr Pilbrow, of Lower Dene, East Grinstead, West Sussex, rang his local law firm, Pearless De Rougemont, over a family matter and asked to speak to a solicitor, but was put through to a woman who at the time was not even qualified as a legal executive.

The judge, sitting with Lady Justice Butler-Sloss, said he was not criticising the widespread practice of solicitors delegating work to others "be they typists, legal executives or whatever" but the right to delegate depended on the implied consent of the client.

The ruling was hailed by Mr Pilbrow as "a victory for consumers.

Bill Bird — Runs local animal sanctuary, looks after all injured animals

Frau Zimmer — The cook who makes cakes for all the kids in Jellytown

Olive Green — Fastest knitter in Jellytown

Bryan Bashful — Old retired university professor

To be released soon. A WORLD FIRST

The Jellyatrics celebrate the 80th birthday of the famous Jelly Babies

Age Concern finds 'Jellyatric' sweets are not to its taste

By Helen Johnstone

A SWEET designed to offer an amusing alternative to the Jelly Baby, which this year celebrates its 80th birthday, has been given a sour welcome by Age Concern.

Jellyatrics, as the name suggests, are based on elderly characters with walking sticks and Zimmer frames. More than a million of the sweets have been distributed to 3,000 shops this week, including Tesco and Jet petrol stations, ready to go on sale.

Lemon-flavoured Bill Bird wears a flat cap and runs a sanctuary for injured birds in Jellytown. Raspberry-flavoured Bryan Bashful is a retired professor who is never without his cardigan and needs a walking stick to get around. The orange Frau Zimmer, with her fondness for baking, is even less mobile, while her friend Olive Green is the fastest knitter in Jellytown.

Age Concern yesterday described Jellyatrics as "clichéd elderly characters" and criticised the makers for perpetuating stereotypes. A spokesman for the pensioners' pressure group said: "It's unfortunate they have to use stereotypes which do not represent the majority of 80-year-olds."

Ashley Sims, who came up with the Jellyatrics range after hearing on the radio that Jelly Babies were soon to celebrate their 80th birthday, claimed yesterday that, if Age Concern learnt something about the characters, it would not be offended.

Mr Sims, 27, from Duffield, Derbyshire, said: "I thought they were getting a bit old to be babies. It took me two days to think of the name before I registered it as a trademark. But the Jellyatrics have taken two and a half years to develop."

Mr Sims, who also invented the upside-down map, had his idea turned down by several companies, including Jelly Babies maker Trebor Bassett, before finally agreeing a five-year contract with Barnac, of Peterborough. The former salesman is hoping to extend the idea to toy and crockery manufacturers. "I also have a firm that's interested in making Jellyatric toys. They would also make good characters for a television cartoon."

Mr Sims, who left school with one O-level before studying business at college, also plans to launch the world's first Afro-Caribbean sweet, a blackcurrant-flavoured Jamaican Jellyatric named Pastor Deakus.

Inquiry examines new cars 'rip-off'

Manufacturers stand accused of inflating prices, reports Arthur Leathley

THE pricing of new cars is to be investigated by the monopolies watchdog in the wake of a report that lambasts motor manufacturers for forcing dealers to charge inflated prices. New cars in Britain cost up to 50 per cent more than in other European countries.

The Monopolies and Mergers Commission's investigation into the relationship between manufacturers and dealers was ordered yesterday by John Bridgeman, the Director-General of Fair Trading. He criticised price distortion by manufacturers and the refusal of some of them, and dealers, to provide information to his own inquiry. He also made clear that he will use new powers, which come into force next month, to proscute those who fail to co-operate with future inquiries. Conviction for obstruction will carry a maximum two-year sentence and an unlimited fine.

Mr Bridgeman's seven-month investigation into 17 leading manufacturers and more than 400 dealers found evidence that car makers are refusing to give discounts to dealers that could be passed on to motorists. Dealers complained that huge discounts for fleet car sales were effectively subsidised by the public through artificially inflated forecourt prices.

"The market isn't working properly and there is an imbalance of power between manufacturers and dealers which is distorting competition." He criticised manufacturers for not giving dealers discounts for sales volume, providing little incentive to cut prices to increase sales figures.

He also attacked the setting by manufacturers of inflated prices, which "are being used to mask the true selling prices of vehicles". Manufacturers set a recommended resale price, now outlawed on electrical goods, from which discounts were offered by dealers. Mr Bridgeman suggested that the commission, which will have nine months to publish its findings, might call for the practice be made unlawful.

Stephen Byers, the Trade and Industry Secretary, may have to introduce legislation to implement some of the commission's recommendations if it calls for drastic changes to the pricing of some two million new cars sold in Britain each year. The motor industry was investigated by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission in 1992 but Mr Bridgeman said that the commission's recommendations had not had the desired effect. He added: "Overall, the distribution of new cars appears to be as inefficient as it was eight years ago." He is carrying out a separate investigation into alleged cartels in the motor industry.

Paul Everitt, head of policy at the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, said: "We are complying with the rules and we believe that the British consumer is getting a good deal. We are offering very competitive prices. You have to remember that the prices compared in European surveys look merely at the list price of vehicles. What people actually pay in Britain is usually a lot less."

Alan Pulham, director of the National Franchised Dealerships Association, said he hoped the investigation would loosen the "stranglehold" manufacturers had over dealers.

Sheila McKechnie, director of the Consumers' Association, said: "We will be showing the MMC inquiry our detailed evidence of the scale of the problem as part of our campaign to end the great British car rip-off."

HOW PRICES COMPARE

Even cars built in Britain and shipped to the Continent are on sale at a much lower cost than at home.

According to a European Commission survey last month, Rover, owned by BMW, was the company with the biggest differentials. Its 214 hatchbacks, built in Birmingham, cost nearly 52 per cent more in Britain than in France — £10,953 against £7,210.

Other large differentials include: Alfa Romeo 145, £7,417 in Spain, £10,776 in Britain (45.3 per cent); Fiat Bravo, £7,281 in The Netherlands, £10,557 in Britain (45 per cent); Rover 414, £7,949 in Portugal, £11,379 in Britain (43 per cent).

Other examples include the Ford Focus, £7,946 in Portugal, £10,157 in Britain (27.8 per cent); Range Rover V8i, £28,948 in Portugal, £35,574 in Britain (22.9 per cent); VW Polo, £5,426 in Sweden, £7,163 in Britain (32 per cent).



John Dunn with his father's 1977 Beetle: "He was worried that it would get damaged"

Careful owner drives up price of shiny Beetle

By Simon de Bruxelles

"ONE careful owner" is an understatement when it refers to Reg Dunn's beloved Volkswagen Beetle.

The late Mr Dunn bought the silver car new in 1977 and since then it has travelled only 1,050 miles. On the rare occasions that he took it for a spin he checked weather forecasts for the previous three days to ensure there was no danger of the immaculate bodywork coming into contact with mud.

Mr Dunn never drove the car further than 36 miles and banned his wife, Edna, from driving it, although he did allow her to occupy the passenger seat.

Today Mr Dunn's pride and joy is expected to fetch more than the price of a new car when it is sold at auction, looking no different to the day it left the showroom 22 years ago. Bidding at Bristol Auction Rooms is expected to start at £10,000 and could reach £20,000.

The former gunshop owner, who died in 1986 aged 73, bought the limited edition Beetle for £2,400 in 1977 after hearing that VW were stopping German production for the British market. His son John, 61, said yesterday: "Even in the late 70s, he found driving conditions a bit cut and thrust and was worried that it would get damaged."

Mrs Dunn, who died in December, never drove the car and rejected several offers of £10,000. The closest she came to selling was to offer first refusal to the German footballer Jürgen Klinsmann, then playing for Tottenham Hotspur. He turned the offer down.

Her son said: "My mother and father were both great fans of German workmanship and mother believed that Herr Klinsmann embodied true sportsmanship."

Rector loses fight to stop parish cut

By Ruth Gledhill, Religion Correspondent

A RECTOR has lost his landmark legal case brought after his bishop decided to reduce the size of his Church of England parish by more than half.

The Rev Ashley Cheesman, 46, was told by three members of the Privy Council in a majority judgment at Downing Street yesterday that the Bishop of Leicester had acted legally in halving his 800-strong parish. The combined membership of 205 across six churches will fall to 59 across three, in the parish of Gaulby.

The judgment by two of the members of the judicial committee of the Privy Council was arrived at by Lord Hobhouse of Woodborough and Sir Christopher Slade. Lord Lloyd of Berwick found in favour of Mr Cheesman.

The case was brought by the Manufacturing, Science and Finance union, whose membership includes clergy, on behalf of Mr Cheesman. It followed acrimony between the vicar and his former bishop, the Right Rev Thomas Butler, who has moved to Southwark.

Mr Cheesman had claimed he was a target because of his Evangelical style in a diocese where a more liberal Christianity is predominant. He had said that the reduced size of his parish would mean a cut in church income because of lower earnings from funerals, christenings and weddings.

The judgment closes several legal and parochial disputes. Mr Cheesman became Rector of Gaulby in 1988. The judgment notes "signs of impending trouble"; eight months later a churchwarden resigned.

There were further difficulties when the rector was charged with "wilfully and indecently exposing himself" in a public lavatory. He was convicted by magistrates and suspended from his job, but in 1990 had his conviction overturned because the prosecution had failed to prove "annoyance to the public". An attempt to take action against Mr Cheesman under church law was discontinued after four years, with costs amounting to more than £100,000.

Bishop Butler was appointed to Leicester in July 1991. The next month Mr Cheesman's suspension was ended and he was back at work.

But difficulties continued. In 1994, some parishioners objected to his Evangelical style and began holding services of prayers and hymns in the churches without him. To try to halt the impromptu ceremonies, he locked the organ in one of his churches to stop it being played without his permission.

Acrimony increased when Mr Cheesman invoked ancient church law allowing him to appoint churchwardens. He made his mother a churchwarden even though she lived 100 miles away.

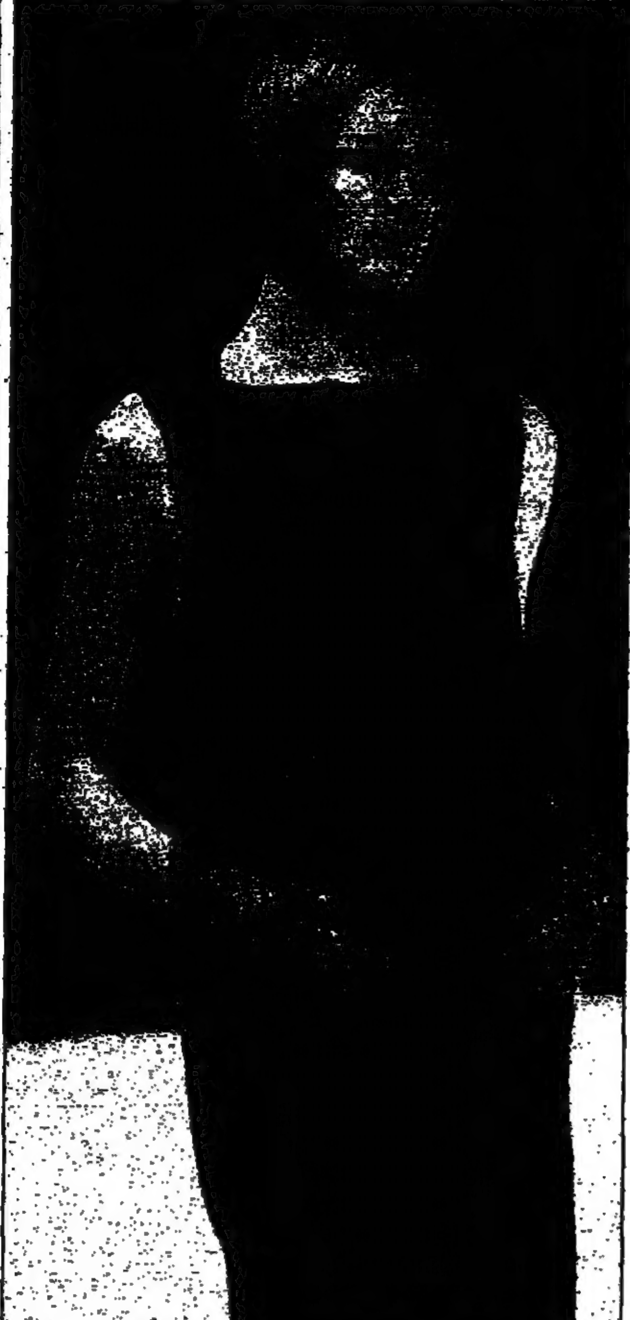
Finally, and despite objections from Mr Cheesman's supporters that it was being used "at the behest of a small but influential and vociferous group opposed to Mr Cheesman", the scheme to reorganise the parish was submitted to the Queen last year for approval.

Bishop Butler decided to use the 1983 Pastoral Measure to reduce the size of Mr Cheesman's benefice, which consisted of three combined parishes with six churches and a Chapel of Ease. Under the measure, any such scheme must be "designed to make better provision for the cure of souls".

The judgment says: "The bishop's view was that the structural difficulties and the antagonism between the lay people in the parish were such that ... the scheme had become necessary."

Roger Lyons, MSF general secretary, said that Mr Cheesman was distraught over the judgment.

SIMON WALKER



NEIL MUNNS



A design from Hussein Chalayan's TSE collection, left, and part of his London Fashion Week show. The week attracted almost 2,000 buyers

Fashion world honours a loyal talent



Chalayan: unlikely to move show to New York

By Lisa Armstrong
Fashion Editor

THEY came in their Manolo Blahnik kitten heels, Prada aqua-soles and ministerial limousines to honour their own at last night's British Fashion Awards.

Stephen Byers, the Trade and Industry Secretary, joined Helena Christensen to present the Designer of the Year award to Hussein Chalayan. The award was much applauded, Chalayan being one of the brightest, most stimulating talents of the past decade. His most recent show was one of the highlights of London Fashion week.

The enigmatic 28-year-old Central St Martin's graduate first appeared in 1993 with a collection which, he said at the time, he had buried in his garden to achieve that perfect, er, just buried-in-the-garden look. Since then he has proven that he can be commercially minded as well as conceptual. Apart from his own label, he produces a range for Top Shop's TS line and another for the luxury New York-based cashmere specialist TSE.

The awards, held at the Natural History Museum and hosted by Ben Elton, came as London Fashion Week once more faced the prospect of successful designers being lured elsewhere.

Alexander McQueen, who was diplomatically presented with a special achievement award last night, has announced that he will show in New York next season, and Chalayan was rumoured to be moving his show there. But a spokesman for the house said last night that "this categorically is not happening — unless something huge and unforeseen happens, we will be staying in London".

Other honours at the ceremony went to Elspeth Gibson, who won the new generation award; Burberry, the newly revamped classic British house; and to Paul Smith for his menswear.

This year's London Fashion Week was one of the most successful. The number of buyers attending was about 2,000, 16 per cent up on last year. John Wilson, chief executive of the British Fashion Council, said yesterday: "We were delighted with the way things went. It is a hopeful sign that Britain is still regarded internationally as a cradle of talent."

MP lied to police, but only about his age

By Mark Inglefield
Political Reporter

JOE ASHTON, the Labour MP, admitted yesterday that he had lied to police about his age, but excused himself on the grounds that the actress Joan Collins would have done the same. Mr Ashton, 65, gave the false date of birth when he was found in a massage parlour that was being raided

"You stick at sixty four," he said. "I don't know what Michael Caine, Sean Connery and Joan Collins and all the others do, but I have my suspicions."

Mr Ashton, the MP for Bassetlaw, made his admission at a press conference at the House of Commons as he attempted to rebut newspaper reports that he had misled the Northamptonshire police. He admitted he was at the Thai House and Siam Sauna in Northampton on the night of the raid, which took place last November.

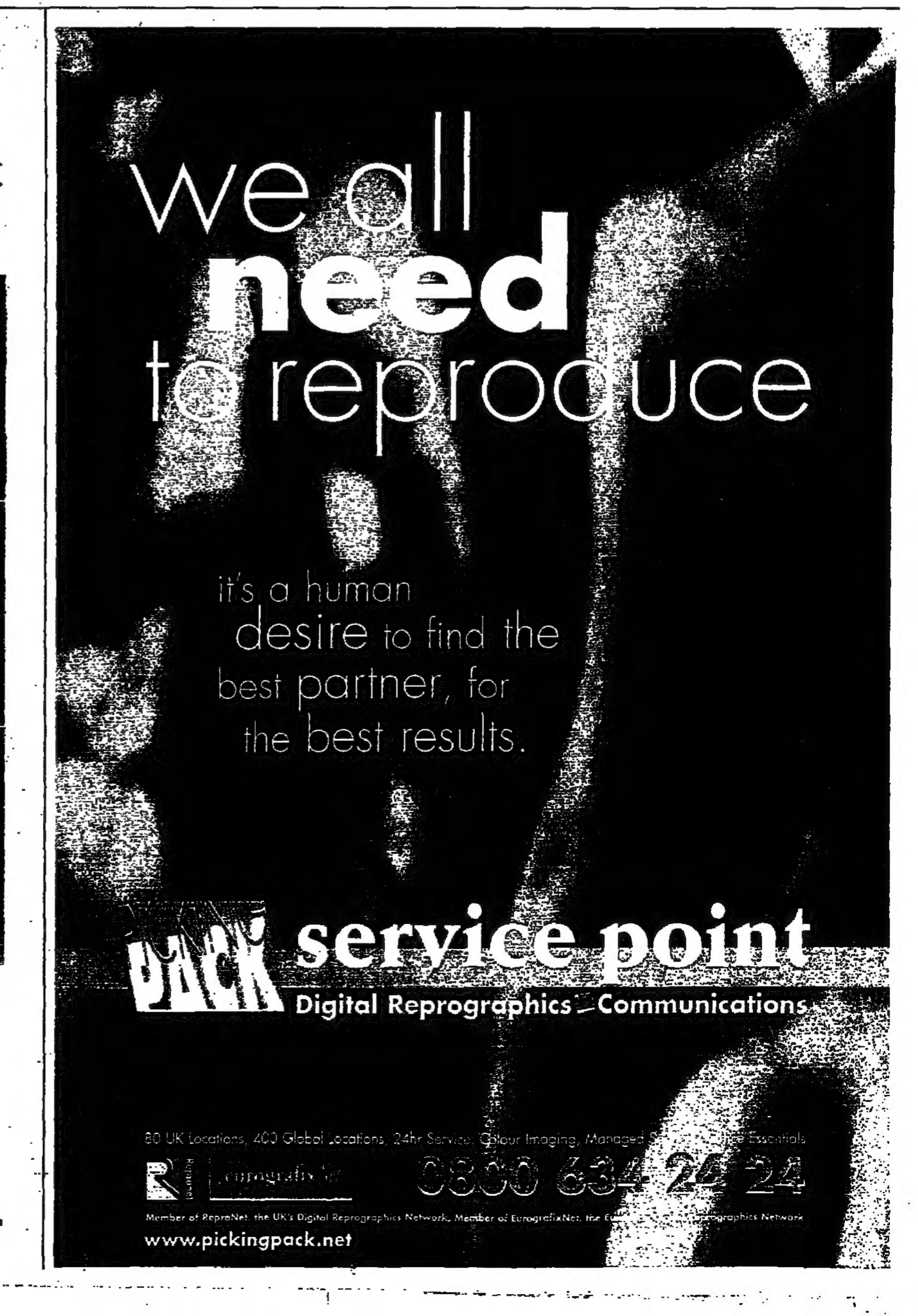
Mr Ashton refused to say what he was doing at the massage parlour and insisted he had done nothing wrong: "There was no sex or that sort of thing," he said. "I have answered that question to my wife and to the Chief Whip. They are both very satisfied."

Apart from lying about his age, Mr Ashton denies misleading the police, who had raided the massage parlour as part of an investigation into an illegal immigrant prostitution ring. When asked why he had not revealed he was an MP to the police at the time, he said it was because he feared he might receive "special favours".

Chris Fox, the Northamptonshire Chief Constable, said that some of the information given to police had been "misleading" and that a computer check had to be run to establish Mr Ashton's identity.

Mr Ashton said that he was considering lodging a complaint with the Registrar of Data Protection to discover how the details of the incident were revealed to the newspapers.

He also said he would be seeking the advice of Jack Straw, the Home Secretary.



Father tells of girl's heart surgery death

Couple thanked disgraced doctor for trying to save their daughter's life, reports Ian Murray

THREE fathers told the story of their babies' heart operations to the Bristol hospital deaths public inquiry yesterday.

The two whose children survived had nothing but praise for the care they had received, but Michael Parsons, whose daughter died, described the actions of the care by the same staff as "criminal".

Both Mr Parsons and John McLorinan had children born with Down's syndrome, which is commonly linked to heart problems. Mr Parsons' daughter Mia died in the operating theatre after a nine-hour operation by James Wisheart, the consultant surgeon who was struck off last June. Mr McLorinan's son, Joe, is nine now, and full of energy, six years after Mr Wisheart operated on him.

Philip Wagstaff, 34, from Exeter, said that his daughter, Amy, had been born with two holes in the heart and a narrowed artery, but was "very very well" after an operation performed by Mr Wisheart. The operation was a success and Amy, now seven, is "very very well".

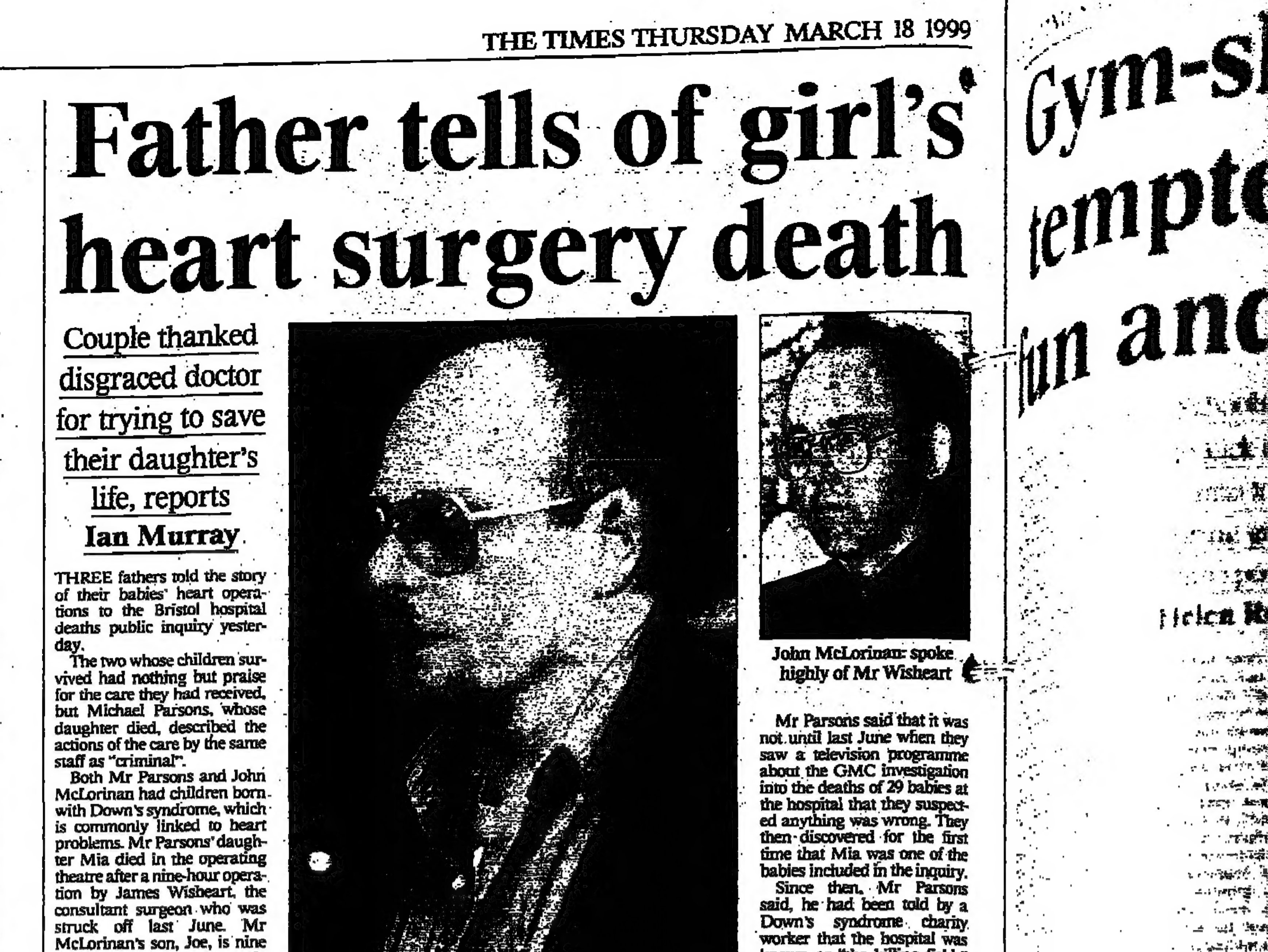
Mr Parsons, 47, from Carmarthen, told the inquiry in Bristol that Mr Wisheart said there was only a 20 per cent risk of his daughter dying if she had the operation to repair a hole in her heart.

"He told us that, without the operation, Mia would die, but with it she could run and jump and play like any normal child," he said. "We decided to have the full operation on the basis that it would save her life, on the basis of the low risk percentage and on the basis of Mr Wisheart's reputation. We were happy we were in the best of hands and it was a privilege for us to be there. We bonded very well with Mr Wisheart."

Early on the morning of the operation in May 1993, Mr Parsons said, a nurse at the infirmary asked him and his wife to give Mia the pre-medication that would send her to sleep before the anaesthetic. They refused, and the nurse "who just wanted to go home" spilt some. The baby did not go to sleep.

"I was content to cuddle her in my arms, but I deeply regret now my decision to ask the nurse to give the pre-medication," he said.

Mr Parsons said that he carried Mia to the operating theatre, where "I handed Mia over to the anaesthetist and then my wife gave her a kiss. As the anaesthetist gave her an injection, Mia gave what I think was the hardest scream she had ever screamed. For some reason I said: 'That's right Mia; kick back at the bastards.' I don't know why I said that. I had no idea then that things were going to work out as badly as they did."



Michael Parsons, whose daughter, Mia, died in surgery

They waited for news in a ward where there was a woman with a two-year-old girl being admitted for an operation the next day. Nine and a half hours after Mia's operation began, a nurse came in and told them that she had died. The woman with the little girl became distraught, so they went out into the corridor.

> 'We found ourselves outside, completely distressed and dazed'

Shortly afterwards they saw Mr Wisheart, who told them that the operation had been a success, but that Mia's heart had failed to restart after she was taken off the bypass machine used to pump blood while the heart was undergoing surgery. "We felt shocked and dazed, but, because he was so distressed, we felt sympathy for Mr Wisheart and thanked him for trying to save Mia's life," Mr Parsons said.

The couple were then asked if they wanted to see Mia to say goodbye to her. They were shown into what Mr Parsons described as a junk room with a small sofa in it. "They brought her in a white babygrow suit and a Moses basket. My wife doesn't like white and it shocked and hurt her to see our daughter wearing it. She was bloated and did not look like our daughter."

The cardiac unit support staff worker took a photograph of his wife with the baby, cut off a lock of her hair and took hand and foot prints for them. Then they were asked to leave, even though they wanted to stay.

"They said we would disrupt the ward. We found ourselves out of the door completely distressed and dazed. We wandered around the streets of Bristol crying, with people staring at us."



John McLorinan: spoke highly of Mr Wisheart

Mr Parsons said that it was not until last June when they saw a television programme about the GMC investigation into the deaths of 29 babies at the hospital that they suspected anything was wrong. They then discovered for the first time that Mia was one of the babies included in the inquiry.

Since then, Mr Parsons said, he had been told by a Down's syndrome charity worker that the hospital was known as "the killing fields" by some consultants in the South West. It was criminal, he said, that Mr Wisheart had been allowed to continue operating when it was known he had a high failure rate.

But Mr McLorinan could not have spoken more highly of the surgeon, who operated on his son. The boy had been born with other serious conditions apart from the hole in his heart, and doctors had warned him and his wife that the baby had a 20 per cent chance of survival. As time went by, Joe's condition improved and the couple were told he had a 50 per cent chance of surviving the heart operation. "It was on the toss of a coin, but we wanted him to have a chance because otherwise he would die," said Mr McLorinan, 50, from Weston-super-Mare.

"We were so confident that in Bristol we had got the best, even though the operation was a high risk," he said. After the operation Joe had needed heart stimulation in the middle of the night and Mr Wisheart had turned up to see him then. "At all times of day or night you could see him walking about the wards," he said. "He was a very caring man and never seemed to go home.

"We were very lucky to get someone prepared to take the risk and operate on him. We are very, very satisfied."

Mr Wagstaff said that, after the operation on Amy, she became ill and they were told that she had a blood clot on the heart, which had to be removed by a further operation. Mr Wisheart performed this in the intensive care unit.

The inquiry continues.

Inquiry over 'maimed women'

By Helen William

THE Health Secretary has set up an independent inquiry into why the incompetence of a gynaecologist who was struck off last September did not come to light earlier, it was announced yesterday.

Rodney Ledward's botched operations left more than 200 women maimed. He worked as a consultant gynaecologist at the South Kent Hospitals NHS Trust and was dismissed in December 1996.

The inquiry, set up by Frank Dobson, will review the role of the management and staff of the trust, its predecessor body, and other organisations concerned with quality of care. It will investigate the care of patients treated by Mr Ledward at the trust between 1990 and 1996 and earlier events where appropriate. Its recommendations could be incorporated into guidance for NHS hospitals.

Soon after the General Medical Council's verdict to strike Mr Ledward off the medical register, Mr Dobson told the trust to carry out a review of his work. Within two months of his being struck off, 179 women had come forward with concerns at surgical treatment by him. The trust is encouraging his former patients who need help to come forward.

The inquiry, to sit in private and report to Mr Dobson, will be chaired by Jean Ritchie, QC. Mr Dobson said: "It is vital that the public has full confidence in the NHS's commitment to clinical quality, and know that steps are being taken to ensure it is of the highest standard." (PA News)

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Gym-shy girls tempted with fun and games

Schools advised to kick old ways into touch to bring girls back into sport, writes Helen Rumbelow

THE era of the schoolgirl "radiator-hugger", who fights shy of games supervised by aggressive, jolly-hockey-sticks teachers on freezing pitches, could soon be a thing of the past.

Schools are being advised to tempt girls into school sports with aerobics, private shower cubicles and the promise of discos with male athletes.

The move is part of the Government-backed Girls in Sport Partnership scheme, which arose from research showing that four out of ten girls drop out of sport by the age of 14, twice as many as boys. The research rang alarm bells at the Youth Sport Trust, which is sponsoring the project with Nike, because it has been proved that playing sport increases girls' confidence and makes them less likely to have eating disorders and unplanned pregnancies, or to leave school early.

"We're obviously very concerned," said Tony Banks, the Sports Minister, at the project launch at the Arsenal football ground in North London. "Decisive action must be taken to stop the falling numbers of girls in sport."

The new approach is based on a survey, conducted by Loughborough University, of attitudes to PE among 3,000 children aged 11 to 14. While boys were generally enthusiastic about sport, especially football, girls had a long list of complaints. This did not make them lazy or weedy, the trust said, but showed that schools had been ignoring how different girls were from boys.

"We know what we have to do to keep women in sport," David Kirk, Professor of Youth Sport at Loughborough, said. "Girls are much more likely to be motivated by fun, rather than winning at competitive games. Even simple things, like that old horror of waiting to be picked for teams: we can't do that sort of thing any more."

The traditional double hockey or compulsory cross-country run is out of favour because girls resent structured or forced activities. They should be replaced by self-defence, dance, aerobics and alternative sports such as football and softball.

The mottled thighs of girls huddling for warmth or a cigarette at the end of the pitch should be a thing of the past: schools are being advised to offer indoor alternatives on cold days.

Baggy gym knickers and unflattering pleated skirts should be replaced by trendier — and warmer — tracksuits, which the girls can keep in a "sports wardrobe" at school. The bulldog of a games mistress bellowing instructions from the sidelines should now live on only in older women's nightmares. Professor Kirk said: "Girls want to play with their friends in a friendly atmosphere, so, if you make a mistake, no one yells at you."

The reforms are being tested in a pilot scheme at 52 schools across the country. The researchers will return in the summer term to monitor girls' reactions.

RICHARD CANNON



Sport for all: netball in the sunshine at Langdon School in East Ham, London, yesterday

Dead rats save grouse chicks from predators

By Magnus Linklater

AN EXPERIMENT designed to prevent hen harriers from preying on grouse by feeding them dead rats has been hailed a success after a one-year trial in Scotland.

More than 3,000 white rats were fed to six breeding pairs of harriers, one of Britain's deadliest birds of prey, on the Langholm Moor in Dumfries and Galloway. By placing the rats on perches near the harrier nests, the birds were persuaded to take free food instead of hunting for grouse.

First estimates, announced yesterday by Scottish Natural Heritage and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, suggested that 35 to 40 grouse chicks had been saved for each harrier nest supplied with rats. The inspectors monitoring the nests saw remains of mammals other than rats, but no grouse remains.

The total costs of the excercise was estimated at £750 per nest per year, but SNH suggested that the saving in live grouse might amount to £800 a nest. The results have persuaded them to continue the experiment for another year.

Magnus Magnusson, the SNH chairman, said that many landowners would like to try the technique, and that SNH had produced a booklet describing the experiment in the hope that they would use rats rather than illegally killing or scaring off harriers.

The results were greeted cautiously by Maurice Hankey, the director of the Scottish Landowners Federation. Although he welcomed the results, he said that one year was too short a time for valid conclusions to be reached. He gave a warning that, if harrier numbers were allowed to grow too high, commercial grouse shooting could be wiped out.

Dick Potts, of the Game Conservancy Trust, one of the partners in the experiment, said that "diversionary feeding" would not work unless harrier numbers were controlled by other means.

"On its own, it would increase the number of harriers and so exacerbate the problem," he said.

Playgroups get £500,000 grant

By Tim Miles

THE Government yesterday threw a £500,000 lifeline to voluntary playgroups but campaigners gave a warning that hundreds more face closure.

Margaret Hodge, the Childcare Minister, also announced an independent review of the future of playgroups as the Government expands pre-school provision to three-year-olds.

The emergency grant is the second in as many years to voluntary pre-schools, which campaigners claim are being squeezed by the expansion of primary school reception classes and local authority nurseries.

The Pre-School Learning Alliance says that 1,500 playgroups closed during the past two years because four-year-olds were starting primary school earlier.

Margaret Lochrie, the PLA's chief executive, predicted that 1,700 of the remaining 17,500 would close this year as three-year-olds took up places in local authority nurseries.

The Government disputes the PLA figures and maintains that that only 100 playgroups have closed and that others have opened. But Ms Hodge acknowledged the PLA's concerns, and announced an independent review, to report by August, into "how pre-schools and playgroups can play a part in delivering early education and childcare, as we expand both".

Ms Hodge said that playgroups may have to adapt to meet the needs of parents.

"Our research shows the vast majority of pre-schools are willing and considering changes to their services or hours to meet parents, needs," she said. *PA News*

Childcare cash help extended to over-7s

Brown says millions of families will benefit from his expansion of new tax credit, reports Alexandra Frean

CHILDCARE subsidies unveiled in the Budget are to be extended to children aged over 7 in a drive to bolster family life while helping more parents to get back to work.

Gordon Brown said yesterday that millions more parents would now benefit from the new childcare tax credit, which is worth up to £105 a week. It will also mean that childcare for 8 to 14-year-olds will regulated for the first time in Britain.

In an interview with The Times, Mr Brown said childcare could no longer be considered just as part of social policy and an optional add-on for politicians. "Under previous governments matters like childcare were peripheral. We are saying that this is not just a social issue, it is an economic issue and it has moved to the centre of this Government's thinking. When you think of removing the barriers to the discrimination against women in employment, the issue of childcare is absolutely central," he said.

The Chancellor has been a driving force behind the Government's National Childcare Strategy. Tonight he will attend a reception organised by the Kids Club Network, which represents more than 4,000 school childcare projects, as part of its annual conference.

More than £8 billion of public money has already been earmarked for childcare services, including the provision of up to one million out-of-school places over three years, the training of new staff and financial support for parents. Some 60,000 new childcare places have been created this year alone. According to a study by the Kids Club Network, childcare provision is on course to increase by more than 400 per cent by 2003.

More money is expected to flow into the sector as the new tax credit takes off. Some £200 million has been set aside in its first year. The credit will be worth up to £70 a week for families with one child, and £105 where there are two or more children. It will be available from October for parents with a joint income of up to £30,000, and will be paid on a sliding scale.

Mr Brown said that regulating childcare for the over-7s would ensure that the new tax credit was made available to millions more parents than originally planned. This is because it applies only to registered forms of childcare, and until now out-of-school clubs and holiday schemes for those aged 8 or over have been exempt from regulation.

Childcare organisations catering for 8 to 14 year olds will be able to apply for accreditation with and regular inspection by government-approved agencies, such as the Kids Club Network. "This measure will enable parents wanting to take advantage of the childcare tax credit to use breakfast clubs, after-school and holiday clubs, that are run by a school or that use school premises," Mr Brown said.

He also disclosed that the Government is to set up a national telephone helpline and a series of linked Internet sites giving parents details about registered childcare places in their area and information about claiming the tax credit.

The Chancellor added that he hoped to persuade more employers of the economic benefits of providing childcare. "The experience of America is that employers who are prepared to provide childcare have a workforce that is more productive, more likely to stay longer and be loyal to the company. It is good economic sense. It is common sense."

However, he stressed that he was not trying to browbeat parents, but to give them more choices. "I am not trying to tempt more parents into work. I am saying to people, look we understand that the costs of childcare are very high and that there is a gap in childcare places and we understand — especially after all these well-publicised incidents (of child abuse) — that people need to be satisfied about the quality and training of carers.

"What we are doing here for childcare is a breakthrough for Britain and a chance for everybody to feel that they now have opportunities that they did not have before," he added.

£500,000 FOR PLAYGROUPS

The Government gave £500,000 to bail out playgroups yesterday, amid warnings that 100,000 childcare places are under threat (Hannah Betts writes). This is the second emergency grant to voluntary preschools, which campaigners claim are being badly hit by the expansion of primary school reception classes and local authority nurseries.

The Pre-School Learning Alliance claims that 1,500 playgroups have closed in the last two years, as a consequence of four year olds beginning primary school earlier. Margaret Lochrie, its chief executive, predicted that 1,700 more — out of a total 17,500 — would close this year, as three year olds began to take up places in local authority nurseries.

The extra funding is intended to tide playgroups over until the new childcare tax credit comes in this October.



SIMON WALKER

Gordon Brown yesterday: said that he wanted to give parents more choices

Labour softens stance on lorry tax

By Philip Webster, Political Editor

TONY BLAIR hinted yesterday that the Government will look at ways of softening the impact of the Budget on the road haulage industry.

He has asked ministers to meet representatives of the industry which has claimed that transport taxation policies could cost 50,000 jobs over three years. A number of business leaders wrote to *The Times* on Monday protesting at the impact of the increases in diesel duty and taxes on the largest commercial vehicles.

The Times also disclosed that big haulage firms were seriously considering moving parts of their fleets abroad to take advantage of cheaper running costs.

In the Commons yesterday William Hague accused Gordon Brown of neglecting to mention the 12 per cent increase in diesel duty in a "misleading presentation of a dishonest Budget". Mr Blair defended the rise but said he was aware of industry concerns. "I certainly understand the problems of the road haulage industry," he said.

Steve Norris, the Road Haulage Association chief, has been invited to meet John Reid, the Transport Minister.

The industry is pressing for a special fuel duty rebate scheme for trucks of 32 tonnes and over, those worst affected by the taxation increases.

Letters, page 25

Benn and Major dream ticket gives Blair a headache

Tony Benn and John Major, the dream ticket. Readers of the Commons Order Paper must have blinked yesterday to see the former Prime Minister's name after Mr Benn's in a list of otherwise hard-Left Labour MPs on a motion.

And, at Prime Minister's Questions, William Hague took up their campaign as if it were his own. But this is less a new political alignment than the welcome, though chance, broadening of the debate over the balance between the executive and the legislature.

The issue producing this unlikely alliance is the appointment of the two British members of the European Commission. The Benn/Major/Hague group argues that they should be approved by the Commons before their formal appointment.

This is now politically attractive, given the arguments about the Commission's lack of democratic accountability. But there was more than a touch of opportunism about Mr Hague's involvement, since, as a somewhat bemused and reluctant Tony Blair pointed out, the Tory leader had not made the suggestion in his letter about the next Tory nominee before this week's row erupted.

There is an important constitutional, as well as political, point here. At present, Prime Ministers make appointments to a wide range of posts: bishops, judges, ambassadors, royal commissions, chairmen of public bodies, as well as ministers and peers. These executive powers such as signing treaties and declaring war, subject to the approval of the Commons. As I discussed last Friday, he has just produced a Bill, his third on the issue, with cross-party backing, including from David Davis, the former Tory minister and chairman of the Public Accounts Select Committee. Governments would still make nominations, but the Commons would have to give its approval.



ecutive powers such as signing treaties and declaring war, subject to the approval of the Commons. As I discussed last Friday, he has just produced a Bill, his third on the issue, with cross-party backing, including from David Davis, the former Tory minister and chairman of the Public Accounts Select Committee.

This proposal would strengthen the accountability of the executive to the legislature, particularly now that many important public jobs are exercised at arms length from ministers themselves — by the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee, by utility regulators and by European commissioners.

The counterview is that quality people will not put themselves forward if they are subject to the intrusive scrutiny which some nominees face under the American Senate's confirmation system. These fears can partly be answered by having tight rules both on the length of the process and by limiting the issues that can be raised to their professional suitability for the post in question.

Others argue that the Commons would somehow become committed to the nominees, and unable to scrutinise them subsequently, if MPs were involved in the appointment process. That certainly does not happen in the United States.

The main objection is that Prime Ministers never want to limit their patronage. Ministers squashed a proposal by the Treasury Select Committee for formal confirmation of members of the Monetary Policy Committee, though Giles Radice, its chairman, has introduced post-appointment hearings.

Mr Hague's advocacy of the idea has made it much less likely that Mr Blair will agree. But an enterprising committee chairman should hold a quick inquiry, if only to force the Government to come up with a full explanation for its defence of patronage.

Islands must drop anti-gay legislation

By Roland Watson, Political Correspondent

BRITAIN'S outposts will have to repeal anti-homosexual laws and tighten up financial rules for their inhabitants to receive full British citizenship, Robin Cook said yesterday. The changes will be required by the Government as part of the deal which will see all 150,000 people living in the 13 dependent territories given British passports.

It will allow those living in the islands the right to move to Britain, although Mr Cook said he did not expect a mass influx because 70 per cent of them enjoyed a higher per capita income than UK residents.

The requirement for territories to decriminalise consensual homosexual acts in private, in line with the UK Sexual Offences Act 1967, is aimed at the five Caribbean territories of Anguilla, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Montserrat and Turks and Caicos Islands.

The British Virgin Islands and Bermuda will also have to repeal the rights of their courts to pass sentences of corporal punishment. And Bermuda will have to renounce the death penalty for murder.

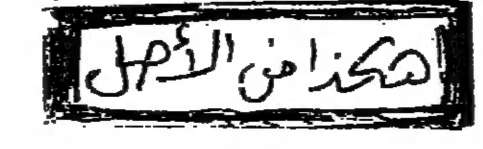
Mr Cook said the changes were necessary to ensure the territories abided by the same standards as Britain and did not fall short of the European Convention on Human Rights. He also warned the Cayman Islands and the British Virgin Islands that they had until the end of the year to meet international standards on money-laundering and the transparency of their financial systems, including co-operating with law enforcement authorities.

The details are contained in a White Paper unveiled by Mr Cook yesterday, titled *Partnership for Progress and Prosperity*. It includes the provision that the territories will in future drop the "dependent" in their titles and be called UK overseas territories.

Leading article, page 25

Cook slur may go to police

THE police could be called in to investigate the attempted smear of Robin Cook by linking him with a dossier of confidential information about a Labour MP (Roland Watson writes). The Prime Minister indicated yesterday that Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, might order an investigation once he had looked at the documents which purported to show that the Foreign Secretary had ordered a trawl of the private life of Diane Abbott, the MP for Hackney North and Stoke Newington. Mr Blair said the papers were an "obvious, amateurish fake" but their surfacing was "no trivial matter". The papers appeared to contain details from Home Office records on Ms Abbott's time as a civil servant, and a stolen Filofax of hers.



Doctors bury lens in cheek to save sight

By Nigel Hawkes
Science Editor

DOCTORS yesterday implanted an artificial cornea into the cheek of a 76-year-old man in an attempt to restore his sight.

In six weeks the plastic lens will be removed, together with the human cells that have grown around it, and used to replace the damaged cornea in one of his eyes.

Cecil Creed damaged his eyes in a chemical accident when a child. He lost the sight in one, while the other has had three corneal transplants, all of which worked for a while before failing.

The latest technique for replacing a cornea — the clear front part of the eye, which covers the coloured iris and focuses light on the retina — has been developed in Italy by Stephano Pintucci, who was at Queens Medical Centre in Nottingham to demonstrate it to Professor Harminder Dua.

It is believed to be the first time this particular technique has been used in Britain, although similar operations, using teeth to form the support for the artificial lens, have been conducted elsewhere.

Stephano Pintucci with his revolutionary lens

During the two-hour operation two plastic lenses, each with a collar of fabric around it, were buried in the skin of Mr Creed's cheek. During the six weeks they are expected to stay there, cells will grow around them, filling the fabric — Dacron, a strong, non-allergenic polyester fabric used in sofas and yacht sails — with a colony of Mr Creed's own cells.

Professor Dua said that the lenses will be removed from the cheek when fully colonised with cells. "We then bore a hole in the centre of Mr Creed's eye to fit the lens," he said.

The collar of fabric then grows into the surrounding eye naturally and is not rejected. "Because the cells have come from the host this method allows us to heal the plastic lens with living tissue."

Professor Dua also took some material, the mucous membrane, from inside Mr Creed's upper lip, and stitched it into place on the surface of his right eye.

"The operation went as planned and it is hoped that in two months the mucous membrane will fuse with the front of Mr Creed's eye and provide sufficient bulk and thickness to the front of the eye to hold the prosthesis in place," he said. By that time both the devices should be colonised by his cells. One will be used, while the other left in place as a spare for many years.

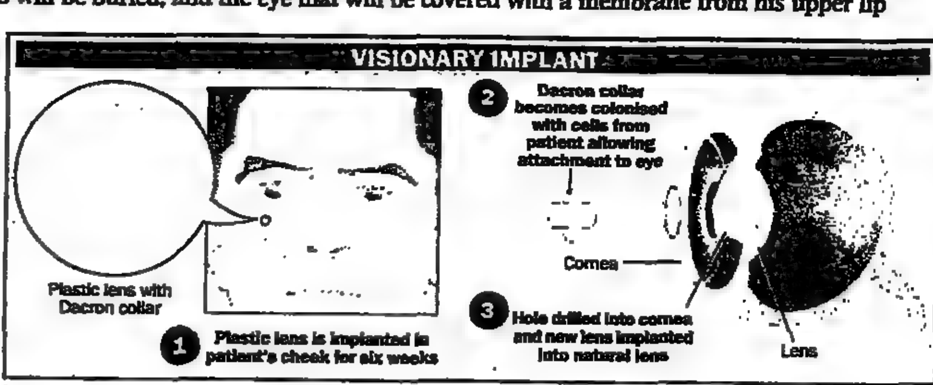
While there are risks involved in the operation, Mr Creed has little to lose — without the operation he will never see again. "I know this is my last chance," he said.

Corneal transplants are common, and very successful. They are used after the cornea has been damaged by infection or injury. Up to 30 per cent may be rejected, in which case a second transplant may be tried. In Mr Creed's case, repeated failure of transplants left no choice but to go for an entirely artificial lens.

Speaking from her home in Moreton, The Wirrall, Mr Creed's wife, Norma, 80, said: "He's been going backwards and forwards to hospital for years. It will be wonderful if he gets his sight back. He will be thrilled to the skies."



Markings on Cecil Creed's face indicate where the lenses will be buried, and the eye that will be covered with a membrane from his upper lip





Pintucci and Dua: the operation went as planned

Ancient crocodiles grew to be giants

THE giant crocodiles that once preyed on dinosaurs just grew and grew, American scientists have discovered.

Deinosuchus was four times as big as any modern crocodile, growing to lengths of up to 33ft and weighing as much as five tonnes. Scientists had been puzzled by the fact that it grew to such a size, given that it did not share the dinosaurs' high metabolic rate.

Gregory Erickson, of the University of California at Berkeley, and Christopher Brochu, of the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago, compared the number of growth rings in the bones of *Deinosuchus* specimens to the length of the bones to estimate a growth rate.

They conclude in *Nature* that the creatures, which lived about 100 million years ago, grew slowly, taking about 35 years to reach their maximum size. They lived for about 50 years. Dinosaurs reached similar sizes in seven or eight years.

Waitrose and Co-op join the GM backlash

By Nick Nuttall
Environment Correspondent

WAITROSE and the Co-op joined the supermarket revolt against genetically modified foods yesterday, promising to make their own-label brands "GM free".

The pledges, which came after Sainsbury's and Marks & Spencer announced a Europe-wide scheme to phase out foods containing ingredients and additives produced from gene-altered crops, will cause concern for the biotechnology companies championing genetic modification.

But supermarket chains that have not banished GM foods from their shelves expressed doubt yesterday about the promises of their competitors, saying it would be difficult to identify all such products.

Waitrose, which has 117 branches, said that none of its own-label products, including pet food, would contain GM soya or maize by the end of the month. A spokesman said the chain hoped that its own-label foods would be free from flours, emulsifiers and other additives derived from gene-altered crops by next year. The Co-op, Britain's third-largest chain, said it had asked suppliers of its own-label food to use ingredients and additives from non-GM sources.

Asda, one of the first stores to begin phasing out own-label food with GM ingredients, said yesterday that the switch would be completed within three months. It has asked the big importers of soya and maize to seek crops free from genetic modification. The store said that the ban included ingredients and additives derived from gene-altered crops. Safeway, Tesco and Somerfield are still committed to own-brand foods with gene-altered ingredients. Each emphasised yesterday the need to offer choice, backed by explicit labelling.

Privately they were questioning whether their rivals could provide genuinely GM-free foods. A Somerfield spokesman said that, because soya from the United States was a mixture, it was impossible to guarantee that foods containing it were GM-free.

Safeway said that it believed there were "tangible benefits" from some gene-altered products, including lower prices. Tesco said: "We have no plans to change our policy."

Sainsbury's and Marks & Spencer have joined chains in France, Ireland, Switzerland, Belgium and Italy to source crops destined for processing into own-label foods that are certified GM-free.

Sainsbury's said the collective buying power would enable them to negotiate a deal that guaranteed GM-free soya and maize. "We have been working on this for 18 months. Our own-brand labels will be free from GM ingredients, additives and derivatives by summer," a spokesman said.

THE PIONEERS

Farmers used selective breeding in Central America more than 7,000 years ago to achieve a feat of genetic engineering unmatched by today's biotechnologists, a report in *Nature* says. A wild grass, teosinte, was changed into maize. The two were thought to be entirely separate, before DNA analysis led by John Doebley, from the University of Minnesota.

Alternatives 'hard to find'

By Our Environment Correspondent

THE ability of stores to stock GM-free, own-label brands was brought into question last night because of the difficulties in finding soya supplies that are 100 per cent GM-free.

They hope to reformulate many foods to replace genetically altered soya with alternatives such as rapeseed oil and wheat-based products, but some foods using soya meal and protein, including vegetarian dishes, are far more difficult to reformulate. So the stores are turning to Brazil and Canada, where it is claimed that there are good supplies of non-gene-altered soya beans.

However, field-scale trials of gene-altered soya are being carried out in Brazil and it is likely that some is entering shipments, a source in the crop-importing industry said.

Brazil also imports large quantities of American soya towards the end of the Brazilian harvest to make up consignments to Europe and elswhere. About 40 per cent of the American crop is genetically modified. Canada's production of GM-free soya is relatively small and much of this has already been signed up by the health food industry.

"So to say that shipments from Brazil are GM-free is probably utter nonsense," the source said. "It may be a few of the beans are gene-modified or it could be much more, you just cannot tell." Conventional maize, the other big crop which is being gene-altered commercially, should prove far easier to source. It is grown in Europe and only 6,000 to 15,000 tonnes of gene-altered crop is in circulation. French farmers are now refusing to grow gene-altered maize amid fears that consumers in Europe will reject the crop.

Sainsbury's rejected suggestions it could not guarantee GM-free own label foods. A spokesman said the store had set up an "audit trail" back to South America, which means it can know everything about the seeds used and the fate of the consignments, from shipping to processing.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Dome free for 10,000 children

A million children from 10,000 schools will be able to visit the Millennium Dome free, the Prime Minister announced. On every schoolday next year, more than 5,000 pupils are expected to visit the Dome in Greenwich for a four-hour tour.

Four draws will be held to allocate tickets. All schools will be able to apply for up to 100 tickets for children aged 8 to 16.

Jennie Page, chief executive of the New Millennium Experience Company, said: "The Dome will be the greatest concentration of entertainment, inspiration and education under one roof. A third of schools will be able to bring children with free admission." Details will be sent to schools in June.

Rapist captured

Andrew Crisp, a rapist who escaped from Lincoln prison last week, has been recaptured in North London. Jamie Lewis, 24, from Lincoln, is to appear at the city's magistrates court today, accused of helping Crisp, 36, to escape.

Library reopens

A partial reopening of the reading rooms at St Pancras will be announced by the British Library today, even if a strike by book delivery staff continues. Management and union officials are sheduled to meet tomorrow.

Officer charged

A police officer has been charged with neglect of duty after the death of Geoffrey Lea, 27, in a cell at Preston police station last year. The Lancashire officer is expected to appear before magistrates in the town today.

Firemen held

Five firemen were arrested by police in Bolton over allegations that they made bogus 999 calls and started fires to increase their earnings. The men all worked as part of a retained, or part-time, crew based at Herwich fire station.

Author in plea to restrict Shakespeare

By Dalya Alberge
Arts Correspondent

THE adventure writer Wilbur Smith said yesterday that children should not be made to study Shakespeare too early or his plays would switch off young minds.

The millionaire author, whose books have sold more than 100 million copies worldwide, said that the Bard should be saved for students who were able to appreciate the works. Speaking at a book-signing in Birmingham to promote his latest novel, *Monsoon*, Smith said: "At 11 and 12, when I was introduced to Shakespeare, I hated the experience. I was beaten across the knuckles and backside if I got it wrong.

"It's like being taught Chaucer at 12. You've been taught one English language, and now you're being introduced to another. I didn't enjoy Shakespeare until I was 16. It was only when I saw Olivier making sense of the whole language that I came to love it."



Smith: owes more to mother and Buchan

Smith believes it was through the stories of John Buchan and others that he "came to love the English language". Remembering how his mother read bedtime stories to him as a child, he expressed dismay that children today tended to rely on television, with programmes such as *Barney* and the *Teletubbies*: "I developed a reverence and love for the written word before I could read."

Smith was born in Central Africa in 1933 and now lives in Cape Town. He has written 26 novels, beginning with *When The Lion Feeds*.

Later Peter Holland, the director of the Shakespeare Institute at the University of Birmingham, said: "Teachers now do not make children wade through Shakespeare. They make him come alive by acting. Watching Shakespeare is not a turn-off. Look at the audiences excited by *Shakespeare in Love*."

Ronnie Mulryne, from Warwick University's English department, said: "Shakespeare is a part of our culture and is central to the way we speak today."

Justice prevails over the millennium bug

THE justice system would not be affected by Millennium Bug, the Lord Chancellor said yesterday.

Lord Irvine of Lairg said that work on Year 2000 compliance was well advanced, and that almost 90 per cent of vital systems in his department would complaint and by the end of April.

The Lord Chancellor's Department, which is responsible for courts throughout the country, as well as the the Land Registry, Public Records Office and the Northern Ireland Court Service, commissoned consultants to ensure that all its computer systems were safe. They concluded that the department had "secured itself from Year 2000 threats and that its customers, suppliers and other partners in the justice system can depend on its services and operations continuing undisturbed".




PETER MACDIARMID

The Roberts family, left, have invested £250,000 in relocating their home near Beachy Head, East Sussex, to a site where it should be safe for the next 50 years. Their plans were brought forward by a 50,000-tonne cliff fall last November

When moving house can be a cliffhanger

Richard Duce watches as a lighthouse family's home is shifted 55ft to save it from tumbling into the English Channel

FOR Mark and Louise Roberts it was the ultimate house-moving nightmare. They had to travel only 55ft — but they were taking their entire home with them.

Home for Mr and Mrs Roberts is the 150-year-old Belle Tout lighthouse, which stood perilously close to the cliff edge on the Sussex chalk downs near Beachy Head. So, with nature issuing a move it or lose it ultimatum, the couple embarked on an engineering feat, financed by a £250,000 bank loan, to relocate the building to a site where it should be safe from the sea for the next 50 years.

On a hazy spring day overlooking the English Channel, Mr Roberts, 34, watched yesterday as his home inched almost imperceptibly away from the edge of the 285ft cliff.

"It reminds me of when my wife was in labour," he said. "There were all these people tending to her needs and there was nothing I could do to help. It reminds me of the agony of waiting to know if everything is going to be all right."

Such a short move takes 17 men,



Brett Bowen greases the tracks on which the lighthouse was moved

a battery of hydraulic jacks, specially greased rails and a computer to monitor every millimetre of movement. The specialist contractors Abbey Pynford had performed a similar task when they moved the chapel at Great Ormond Street hospital.

Mr and Mrs Roberts run a leisure company and have a 13-month-old daughter, Haven, and a six-week-old baby boy, Quinn. They became a lighthouse family when they took a lease on the disused building from Eastbourne council two years ago.

While they knew there would eventually be a need for action, the moving plans were brought forward by a 50,000-tonne cliff fall that left the lighthouse 25ft closer to the sea.

"It was a November morning last year and there was a big rumbling noise like thunder," Mrs Roberts, 30, said. "Mike grabbed the baby and the dog and we jumped into the car. We got to the bottom of the drive, from where you can't see the house, but we did see a massive cloud of dust, so we knew that the cliff had fallen. When we came back we didn't know if there would be half a lighthouse or no lighthouse at all."

The 55ft granite-clad tower was intact, but only 16ft from the sea and contractors have spent the past three months digging through chalk to underpin the building with jacks. Reinforced beams were then cast under the loadbearing walls.

Four hydraulic jacks were used to push the building backwards from the sea along specially greased rails to its new home above a recently built extension.

Sightseers from Eastbourne joined reporters and television crews yesterday to see the thing move. And so it did at 9.40am, for the best part of 2ft, before it stopped again. Apparently some chalk had fallen away from the cliff, but, after rigorous checks proved all was safe, movement started again at lunchtime. Paul Kiss, managing director of Abbey Pynford, was optimistic that the lighthouse would be in place by early evening.

Proceedings were not helped by the brief evacuation of the site for a bomb scare. It eventually transpired that an unexploded device had been found further along the cliffs, where Canadian troops had practised shelling during the Second World War.

The lighthouse has mains electricity and water pumped from an underground well and the heating is run on solid fuel.

The underpinning will remain beneath the lighthouse after the operation is complete for the near-inevitable need for another move in 50 years' time.

Garlic gives piglet taste of mother

BY NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

PIGS whose food is spiked with garlic could help their piglets through the trauma of weaning, according to a scientist. The familiar taste of garlic, acquired through their mothers' milk, would help piglets to eat solid food, as long as it had the same strong taste.

r Jon Day, of the ADAS agricultural research centre near King's Lynn, Norfolk, has evidence that the technique works in rats, and is now looking for funding to try it with pigs. He says that piglets are taken from their mothers at three weeks and put straight on to solid food. Some take as long as a week to start eating it. "A lot suffer, and their growth is set back, which means a loss to the farmer."

At next week's meeting of the British Society for Animal Science in Scarborough, he will present the results of the rat studies. These show that rat pups whose mothers ate garlic or cumin in their diet were more inclined to eat foods containing these flavours after weaning. "The battle is to get them to stick their noses in and take a bite," he told New Scientist. In the wild, piglets are weaned more slowly, gradually adapting to solid food by mixing it with feeds from their mothers. But in pig farms, the process is abrupt. Piglets are taken away from their mothers so that they can produce another litter.

Dr Day says the pork finally produced will not taste of garlic. By the time they reach a marketable weight of 80-100 kilograms, at the age of 18-21 weeks, pigs will have been fed on a range of foods, and the effect of the garlic-flavoured variety used for the awkward weaning period will have worn off.

Yorkshire feta casts off EU fetters

BY ELIZABETH JUDGE

A YORKSHIRE woman was given the go-ahead yesterday to continue selling feta cheese when a European court ruled that the name should not be exclusive to Greek dairies.

It was a "victory for common sense", said Judy Bell, who received more than a hundred letters of support when her battle was reported last year. Feta had been added to the list of protected names produced by the European Commission after a request by Greek cheesemakers.

Yesterday the European Court of Justice agreed with Danish, French and German cheesemakers that they had "unjustly" been stopped from using the name. Feta will now join Eccles cakes and Bath buns as a product that can be sold outside its place of origin.

Mrs Bell, who produces feta from a family-run farm in North Yorkshire, said she was delighted with the ruling. She added: "I had been told by the Ministry of Agriculture that I would not be able to sell my cheese after 2001. Now I will be going full steam ahead."

Mrs Bell's company, Shepherd's Purse Cheese, has been producing the handmade cheese for 23 years. It has won a British Cheese Award and is sold by Tesco and many smaller shops. She said that, when she first heard from the ministry of the objections, she thought it was a joke. "Even Greek tourists at a tra[illegible] fair told me it was as good [illegible]ny they had tasted in Greece."

She said of the public interest in her case: "I have had letters from people telling me to play around with the lettering and rename it 'Efta'. One person suggested I should call it 'I can't believe it's not feta.'"

Britain pays homage to Catalonia's style

Our top architects have given their annual prize not to a person, but to a city, reports Marcus Binney

THE Royal Institute of British Architects has broken with 150 years of tradition and given its annual gold medal not to an architect, but to the city of Barcelona.

The medal, which is the world's most highly prized architectural award, has been granted to almost all the great architects of the 20th century, including Frank Lloyd Wright, Le Corbusier, Alvar Aalto and, more recently, to Sir Norman Foster, Lord Rogers of Riverside and Sir Michael Hopkins. This year the jury deemed that the regeneration of Barcelona in the two decades since the restoration of democracy provided such a shining example to other cities, especially London, that it decided to honour the city, its government, its residents and its design professionals.

Five Barcelona citizens will travel to London to receive the medal. They are Narcis Serra, Barcelona's first mayor after the fall of Franco; Pasquall Maragall, elected mayor four times between 1983 and 1995, and the current mayor: Joan Clos. With them will be two architects, Orial Bohigas, who masterminded the Olympic village in 1992, and Josep Acebillo.

Señor Bohigas said: "It is very important that British architects have given this award not just to fellow architects but to politicians and mayors who have the power to transform cities and are the real authors of change."



Señor Serra will travel to London for the award

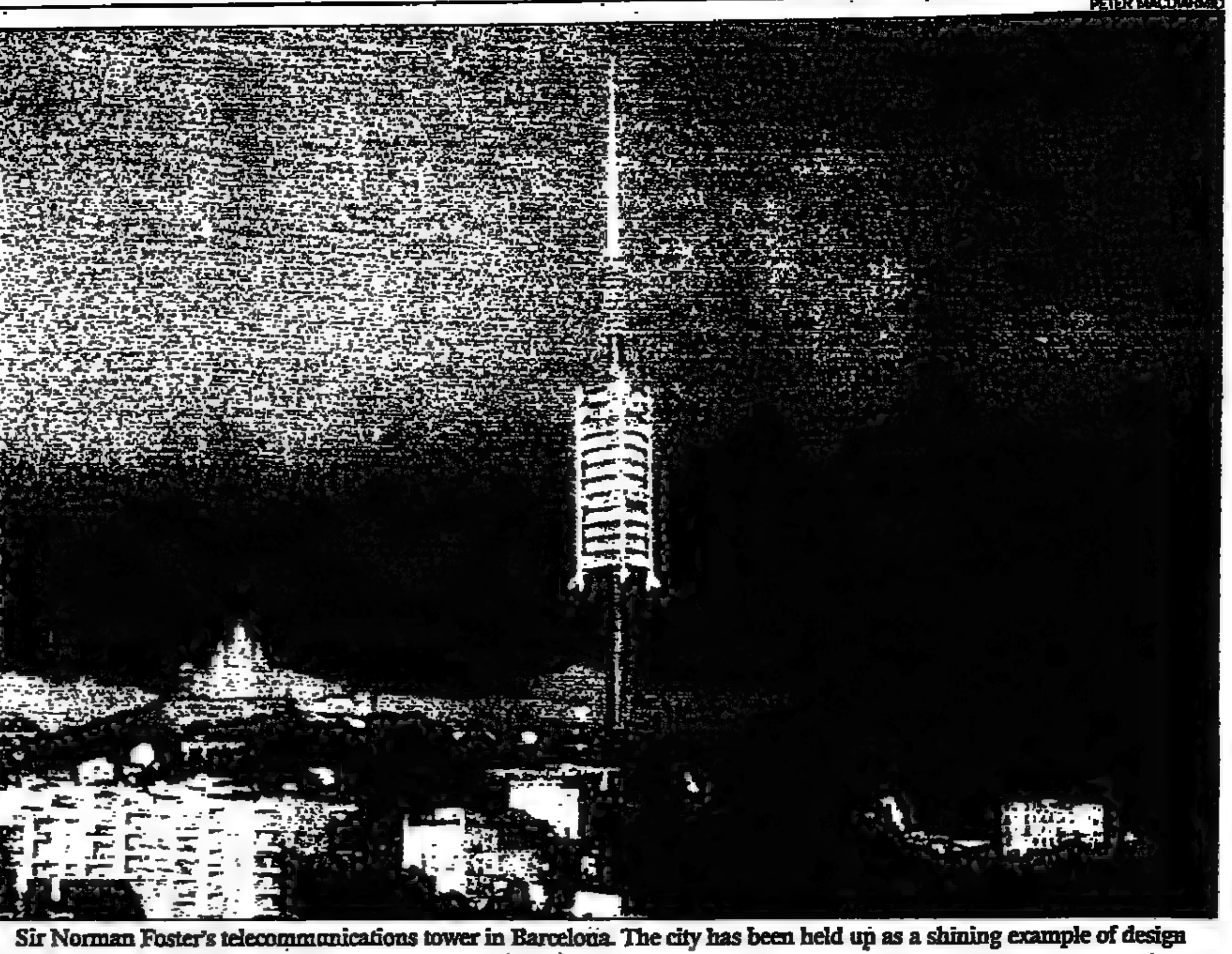
Architectural links between Britain and Barcelona are growing rapidly. The Catalan Enrico Miralles recently won the competition for the new Scottish Parliament, and in Barcelona the Scottish architect David Mackay has been a partner of Martorell Bohigas Mackay since 1962. The firm, runner-up in the competition for the Millennium Village in Greenwich, was recently chosen to plan a new quarter in the London borough of Newham and is also designing a thoroughfare in Cardiff to link the city's centre with its harbour. They are now favourites to design the South Bank arts complex.

Peter Hodgkinson, a British architect who helped to establish the renowned studio in Barcelona with Ricardo Bofill, said: "I came here 33 years ago and fell in love with the country, the food and the wine.

"Architects are much freer here. There's no dominant international style. Better still, architecture is not so developer-led. As designers, we have a much greater control of projects from design to completion.

"We begin at ten in the morning and continue until ten at night, breaking for two hours at lunch. Dinner begins at 11 and the nightlife at one o'clock. There's snow in the Pyrenees, miles of glorious beaches, and I have a farm in the hills with a vineyard."

Mr Hodgkinson was the architect of Barcelona's spacious airport terminal, and the practice also designed the Catalan National Theatre in the form of a giant glass classical temple.



Sir Norman Foster's telecommunications tower in Barcelona. The city has been held up as a shining example of design

The gold medal recognises not just landmark projects in Barcelona — such as the Olympic Stadium, the new modern arts museum and the restored opera house — but many smaller projects, such as the remarkable series of "pocket parks" threaded across the city on formerly industrial land, sometimes retaining factory walls to create secluded and shaded garden rooms.

Having sided with the Communists in the Spanish Civil War, Barcelona was starved of investment under Franco, and decades of dictatorship left the city's historic fabric largely intact. Since the death of Franco, regeneration of old quarters, as well as of many famous buildings by the great Art Nouveau architect Gaudí, has gone hand-in-hand with imaginative work on derelict and empty sites and along the waterfront.

The one major building in Barcelona by a British architect is the highly acclaimed telecommunications tower by Foster and Partners in the hills behind the city, a commission won against fierce competition from the leading Spanish architect Santiago Calatrava.

The royal gold medal for the promotion of architecture was inaugurated by Queen Victoria in 1848 and is conferred by the Sovereign on a person "whose work has promoted, either directly or indirectly, the advancement of architecture". The jury is nominated and chaired by David Rock, president of the royal institute, and this year consisted of Peter Carolin, Sir Norman Foster, Sir Michael Hopkins, Ian Latham, Stuart Lipton, Amanda Levete and Robert Maxwell.

Olympic leap into the hearts of tourists

BY SUSIE STEINER

TEN years ago it did not even make it into the top ten. Then, in 1992, Barcelona hosted the Olympic Games and this year the city has replaced Vienna as No 4 in the list of Britons' favourite city destinations.

100 miles
Bay of Biscay
FRANCE
Barcelona
Catalonia
Madrid
SPAIN
PORTUGAL
Mediterranean Sea

Spain's second city is now spun by travel companies as the chic destination of the Nineties. "It is regarded as hip and cool and has a great nightlife," enthused a spokesman for Thomson, Britain's biggest tour operator.

However, according to Robert Elms, a writer who lived in Barcelona during its Olympic transformation, its change into a big-league resort has not all been for the good. "It has become very shiny and polished and cosmopolitan. It's a great European city now, but it used to be a wonderful Spanish one," he said. "The Olympics brought all the multinationals in, like McDonald's. Barcelona spent an absolute fortune on itself, very wisely, beautifying and tarting itself up.

"In 1981 you could count the tourists on one hand — they just didn't go there. Now you can't walk down the Ramblas and, if you do, you pay £5 for a coffee. The Olympics announced it to the world."

To feed the new British thirst for Catalonia, flights there have multiplied. In 1996 a total of 401,000 aircraft took tourists to Barcelona. In 1998 the figure was 548,000 — an increase of nearly 150,000.

Thomson Breakaway Cities is currently selling five times the number of holidays it was selling in 1994. "It does astonishingly well," the company's spokesman said. "Madrid is only No 10 for city breaks."

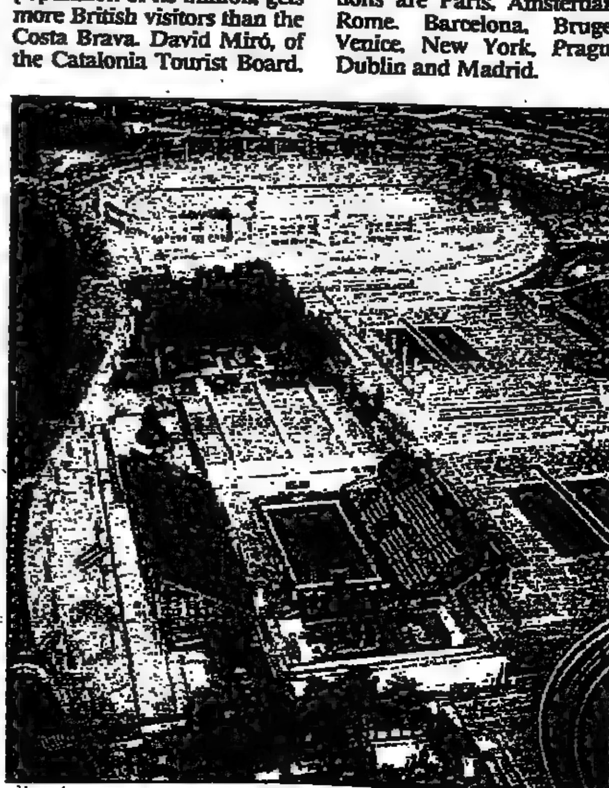
The Catalan capital, with a population of 1.8 million, gets more British visitors than the Costa Brava. David Miró, of the Catalonia Tourist Board, said: "After the Olympics, the city was put on the map. From that moment, we have been a successful tourist city."

Barcelona has long been a cultural haven, synonymous with the architect Gaudí, whose unfinished Temple de la Sagrada Familia (Temple of the Holy Family) draws millions of tourists each year.

Its attractions, including the Picasso Museum, which houses 3,600 of the artist's works, are aided by a temperate climate, easy access to the beach and its bustling main thoroughfare, known as the Ramblas, with its street traders and musicians. "It's very arty," Elms said. "It's the city of Picasso, Gaudí and Miró. It's got great architecture, it's right by the sea and it's got mountains behind — what more could you ask for?"

The British love of Barcelona has been increasingly brought home. Pop music lovers will have been aware of reference to Barcelona in the No 1 hit by the Manic Street Preachers, *If You Tolerate This*, in which they refer to the Ramblas. George Orwell immortalised the region with *Homage to Catalonia* and Whit Stillman's film *Barcelona* followed the romantic exploits of a group of young Americans in the city.

☐ The top ten city destinations are Paris, Amsterdam, Rome, Barcelona, Bruges, Venice, New York, Prague, Dublin and Madrid.



Barcelona was rejuvenated by the 1992 Olympic Games

COMMISSION IN CRISIS

Italy presses for Prodi

FROM RICHARD OWEN IN ROME AND ROGER BOYES IN BONN

NEW PRESIDENT

ROMANO PRODI, the former Italian Prime Minister, was emerging yesterday as front-runner in the tussle to be European Commission President.

"It seems an understanding is emerging between Bonn, London and Rome, to the exclusion of Paris," one Italian official said yesterday with barely disguised satisfaction.

The need to find a successor to Jacques Santer is the main focus of shuttle diplomacy gripping Europe's capitals. The merits of rival candidates dominated talks yesterday between Gerhard Schröder, the German Chancellor, and Massimo D'Alema, Italy's Prime Minister — part of the Chancellor's whistle-stop tour of Europe's capitals ahead of next week's European Union summit in Berlin.

There were signs yesterday that Britain and Germany were increasingly keen to back Signor Prodi, a move that threatens to leave the French Government sidelined. Signor Prodi is on good personal terms with Tony Blair, and German sources said that Herr Schröder also enjoys a good relationship with him.

Italians feel aggrieved when Britain, France and Germany are described as Europe's "Big Three". "Rome backs Prodi for Brussels" was the banner headline in yesterday's *Corriere della Sera*.

Signor Prodi, who still has political ambitions in Italy, was "pondering" whether to throw his hat into the ring. But *La Repubblica* noted that the man who, as Prime Minister from April 1996 to October 1998, persuaded Italians to accept austerity meaures to qualify for the single currency was in "pole position".

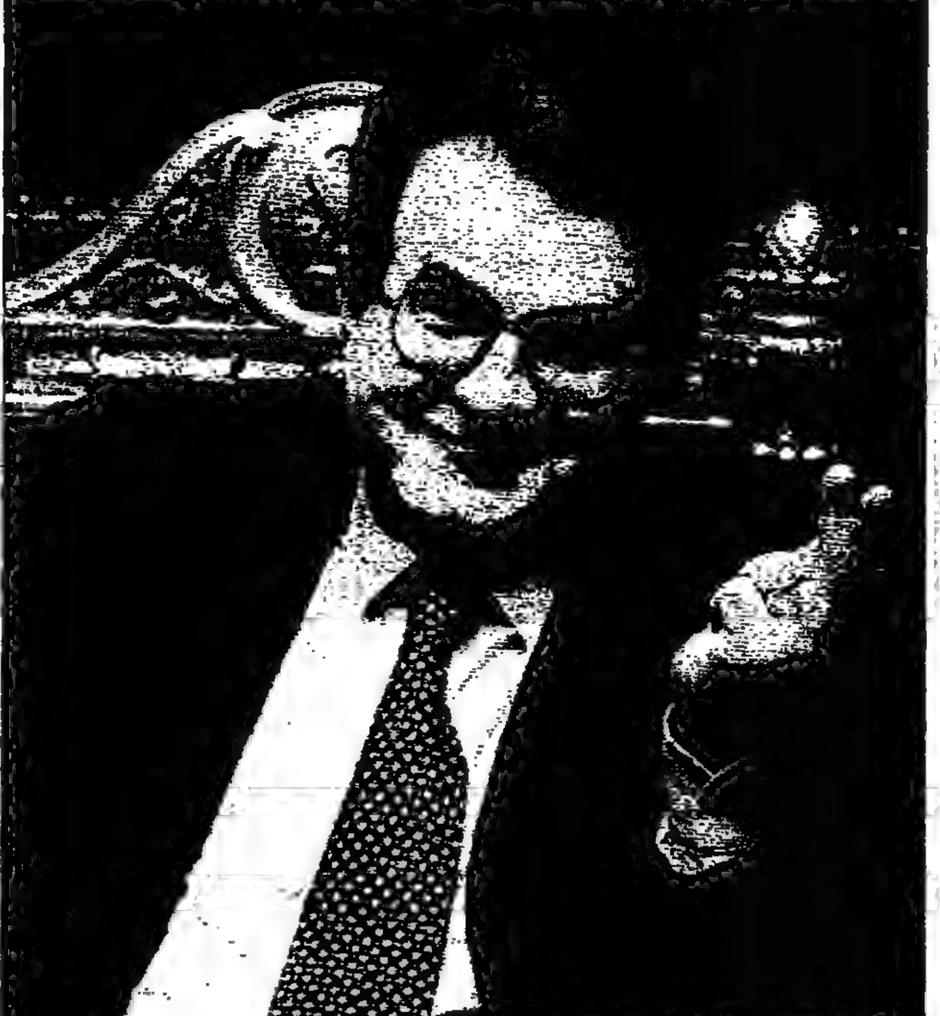
Yesterday Signor D'Alema, who spoke to Mr Blair by telephone on the need for a "quick solution" to the EU's worst constitutional crisis yet, threw his weight behind Signor Prodi's candidacy, saying: "It's now or never. We believe Romano Prodi is the right man for the job."

Signor D'Alema and Signor Prodi have barely been on speaking terms since October, when the Prodi centre-left coalition narrowly lost a parliamentary vote of confidence over the 1999 budget. But the feuding and sniping have been put aside.

Lamberto Dini, the veteran Foreign Minister — he held the post under Signor Prodi, too — said there had "never been any doubt" that he was Italy's choice.

Italian officials said Signor Prodi, 59, met Mr Blair's demand that the new President should be a "real political heavyweight", and was a "photofit" for Herr Schröder's call for a "committed European with political experience, a knowledge of economics and personal integrity".

Anatole Kaletsky, page 24
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ANSA

Prodi: Britain, Germany and Italy appear to want him to succeed Jacques Santer

Whistle-stop tour gives Schröder few solutions

FROM ROGER BOYES IN BONN

BERLIN SUMMIT

GERMANY'S presidency of the European Union seems to be skidding out of control a week before a Berlin summit is supposed to overhaul the financing of the group.

Gerhard Schröder, the Chancellor, keenly in need of a foreign policy success, yesterday wound up a whistle-stop tour of European capitals without a convincing solution for the crisis prompted by the collective resignation of the European Commission.

"This is not a crisis, it is an opportunity," he said yesterday, repeating words used last week after the equally surprising resignation of Oskar Lafontaine, his Finance Minister. The sudden departure of Herr Lafontaine, the collapse of the Commission and Herr Schröder's increasingly obvious lack of European experience has created a chaotic prelude to what was billed as a make-or-break European reform summit next week.

"There have been too many suicides," said a German official. "Berlin is becoming a crisis-management session rather than the orderly reform summit that was planned."

Franco-German ties are at a low point. Southern states, suspicious of attempts to cut agricultural subsidies, detect a German-led conspiracy. Key figures such as Franz Fischler, the Agriculture Commissioner who helped to break the logjam on a farm deal, are now out of play.

Herr Schröder told his counterparts yesterday in Athens and Rome that he had no intention of putting off the Berlin summit. It was more likely that another emergency summit would be held to discuss the future of the Commission.

For now he is concentrating on what he can do best: shuffling names. His advisers say that he is trying to persuade leaders to choose the cream of their political class, rather than the losers of Cabinet wrangles, as candidates for a new Commission. But he has been unable to find a common line on what should now happen to the Commission.

The Professor takes lessons on Blair's Third Way

Richard Owen on the honest and modest man who could lead Europe

The emergence of an Italian as the front-runner to head the European Commission after a scandal involving alleged fraud and mismanagement might seem paradoxical, given Italy's past reputation for unstable and less than transparent politics.

But Romano Prodi — affectionately known as *Il Professore* — is widely admired for his honesty and modesty, and his attempts to reform the Italian political system, as well as his achievement in guiding Italy into membership of the euro against the odds.

Almost always unflappable, with a ready smile, Professor Prodi enjoys bicycling, often takes trains and buses instead of official limousines, and (to the detriment of his waistline, though not on the scale of the former German Chancellor, Helmut Kohl), loves the food of his native Bologna, especially Mortadella sausage.

A family man — he and his wife Flavia, a fellow academic, have two sons in their twenties, one of whom has followed his father to the LSE — Signor Prodi is rooted in the Catholicism of Emilia Romagna, and also in its left-wing traditions. He speaks passable English, as well as German and French.

During his time in power, Signor Prodi carved an international reputation which belied his earlier reputation as a mild-mannered provincial professor, taking up Tony Blair's concept of the "Third Way" with enthusiasm. "He got a kick out of being in on the dialogue between Blair and Clinton," one Prodi adviser said. "He likes to feel part of the ideological reshaping of the democratic Left".

Underlying Signor Prodi's approach was, and is, a fierce pride in Italy coupled with an equally unquestioning commitment to European integration, espoused with a passion which will make him an object of close scrutiny by British Eurosceptics if he does become Commission President. He was driven to get Italy inside the euro, he said recently, by "a realisation that Italy could not miss its appointment with history". Doubts about the euro's weakness or its impact on euroland economies still in need of structural reform (including Italy's) are brushed aside.

As for Britain, Signor Prodi has no doubt that "when the time comes Britons will not want to miss the boat. I do not believe the City of London will want to miss out on the opportunities created by monetary union". He is close to Mr Blair, who reportedly finds Signor Prodi and Flavia congenial company. "It is part of the Blairs' love affair with Italy," one Italian official said. Mr Blair and his family have spent the last three summers in Tuscany, and are expected to go there again this summer. The Blairs and the Prodis have become firm friends.

Last summer, in shirtsleeves and chinos, Mr Blair and Signor Prodi (addressing each other as "my dear friend Tony" and "Caro Romano" respectively) lunched together in the Italian countryside, happily posing afterwards for photographs "for all the world as if they were English and Italian families who happen to have met up on holiday", as one expat in Tuscany put it. But then Prodi the family man is not a pose: he and his wife have a modest income, and his reputation as a man of integrity and simplicity (they live in a flat in Bologna) has won him respect.

Italy remains permeated by Mediterranean corruption. But Signor Prodi, 59, is one of several figures — Massimo D'Alema, his rival and successor, is another — who embody a change in political culture which began in 1992, when the "Clean Hands" anti-corruption campaign led by Milan magistrates brought about the downfall of the Christian Democrats, who had ruled Italy almost without interruption for nearly half a century.

Out of the ashes arose a new Centre-Right, led by Silvio Berlusconi, the media tycoon, which briefly held power in 1994; and a new Centre-Left, with the ex-Communist Party of the Democratic Left (PDS) at its core. Since neither Italy nor the world was ready for a Government led by ex-Communists, the PDS in 1995 looked for a front man with left-wing views but a solid reputation who could head a centre-left alliance, the Olive Tree.

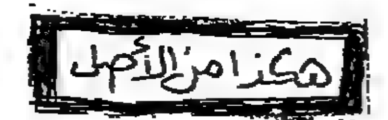
Such a man was found in Signor Prodi, a bespectacled professor of economics at Bologna University who had studied at the LSE as well as the Catholic University of Milan, and who served as head of IRI, the state holding company, from 1982-89.

Critics said he was a "manager" who lacked political experience, and who was uncomfortable on television. His record at IRI, moreover, was not completely untainted: while nobody suggests he profited personally, an investigation was launched two years ago into alleged "abuse of office" by IRI officials, including Signor Prodi, relating to alleged favouritism during the privatisation of a giant state-owned food conglomerate

Voters warmed to his homely style, and in the historic April 1996 poll the Olive Tree won a majority. Outsiders used to mocking Italy's frequent "revolving door" governments predicted a short-lived administration.

But the Prodi Government lasted a near-record two and a half years.

"Everyone keeps asking me about Europe," Signor Prodi said yesterday "I say, yes — but what about Italy?"



BENOIT DOPPAGNE / REUTERS



‘The fraud report was interfered with between Sunday night and Monday’

This lady’s not for burning

THE DEFENCE

Edith Cresson says the evidence against her has been tampered with, writes Adam Sage

EDITH CRESSON responded yesterday, as she has done after almost every chapter of her accident-prone career, by claiming to be the victim of a plot. In an interview, she said that somebody had tampered with the fraud report that led to the European Commission’s downfall.

A section of the report concering the Leonardo training programme, for which she was responsible, “was interfered with between Sunday night and Monday”, she told *Le Figaro*. She had seen a draft of the report on Sunday, but found new wording in the final version on the next day.

“Four paragraphs were modified in a way that was unfavourable to myself and untruthful,” she said. “Someone wanted to make people believe that I had been warned in advance of the malfunctions and that I wanted to mislead the European Parliament. That is an absolute lie.”

Mme Cresson, 65, did not tell *Le Figaro* whom she suspected of tampering with the report, but she has previously asserted that she was the target of German intrigue aimed at damaging France.

Although there was little public support in Paris for Mme Cresson yesterday, French diplomats in Brussels suggested that she had been justified in her claims that the anti-fraud report had been modified at the last moment. They agreed that certain paragraphs had been changed overnight on Sunday.

French feelings about Mme Cresson are coloured by memories of her time in domestic politics. Blaming others has been a constant feature of her public career, and one that seems to have been adopted by her associates.

Dr René Berthelot, the dentist reported to have been the beneficiary of Mme Cresson’s largesse in Brussels, said last year that she had been turned into a scapegoat in Europe, just as she was when she became French Prime Minister eight years ago.

In one of the few interviews he has given to the press, he said that he had known Mme Cresson for 20 years and helped her “as a friend” when she was appointed as European Commissioner. “I have a great liking for her and I was attracted by her dynamism when she was Mayor of Châtellerault”, where he lived, Dr Berthelot told *Le Figaro*.

Mme Cresson used him to keep an eye on the local council in Châtellerault when she was a minister in Paris, and continued to do so when she moved to Brussels. The practice, denounced as nepotism by the fraud inquiry, is common in French politics, where senior figures often occupy several posts.

When François Mitterrand chose Mme Cresson as Prime Minister, in preference to more obvious and heavyweight candidates, there was much surprise in political circles and speculation about their relationship. A rumour they were having an affair was angrily denied by Mme Cresson, although the late President, a celebrated womaniser, never bothered to deny it.

“Isn’t she charming?” he once said.

A similar rumour has hung over Mme Cresson’s friendship with her dentist. French press reports suggest that they were more than friends for a while and lived together at one stage. But Dr Berthelot insists that their relations have always been platonic.

Dr Berthelot was admitted to hospital in December. Press reports said that he had suffered a heart attack, although a family friend, who declined to be named, said yesterday that he had had a nervous breakdown. He is recovering in Poitiers Regional University Hospital in central France.

Before his illness, Dr Berthelot, 70, said of the scandal in Brussels: “This is an attempt to destabilise Edith Cresson.” She has always thought much the same thing and has never been slow to denounce her many enemies.



‘Someone wanted people to believe I would mislead Parliament. That is a lie’

Small-town dentist who has gained international fame as a ‘friend of Edith’

From Susan Bell in Châtellerault

TALK OF TOWN

CHATELLERAULT’S crumbling town hall was veiled in dusty netting yesterday as it undergoes repair work as if in mourning for its disgraced former mayor. This sleepy 10th-century French town on the banks of the River Vienne seems an unlikely setting for international scandal.

At first glance, life seemed to be carrying on as normal, but in the cafés and bars that line the narrow streets, groups gathered to discuss in hushed voices Edith Cresson’s relationship with the town’s grey-haired former dentist which brought about her downfall in Brussels.

Many in Châtellerault are still bitter at what they consider to be Mme Cresson’s abandonment of their town in favour of Brussels only a few months after they had elected her mayor, leaving her deputy, Joel Tordusson, a doctor with little political experience, to take over. “People feel betrayed,” said the owner of the Boulangerie Henri IV.

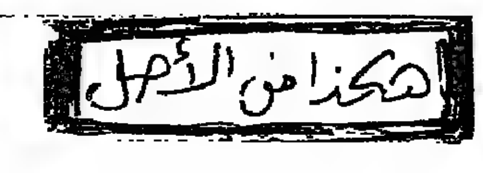
Reactions to Mme Cresson’s resignation from the European Commission were mixed. Some felt that their abrasive former mayor had finally gone too far and deserved her fate. Others were more forgiving, even suggesting she was the victim of a European Union plot. As for Dr René Berthelot, the former dentist she appointed a scientific adviser to the European Commission, bringing charges of nepotism on herself, he has gained fame in Châtellerault as a “Friend of Edith”.

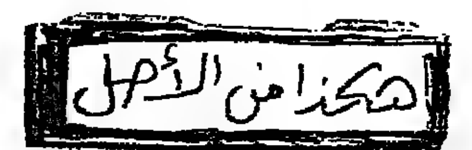
He was not a member of the Socialist Party and appears content to have taken a back seat in local politics. Yesterday local party members appeared anxious to portray the man who earned £45,600 a year from the Commission for doing virtually nothing as a faithful and selfless adviser to the European Commissioner. “He is a comrade of the shadows, a faithful servant who preferred helping his friend without drawing attention to himself without reason,” said a local Socialist Party member.

However his friendship and influence over Mme Cresson is common knowledge in the close-knit small-town community. “It was said that she did nothing without Dr Berthelot’s advice. He was known as her spiritual mentor,” Dominique Delplanque, a businesswoman, said of the man who once boasted that he had drawn up Mme Cresson’s horoscope.

However, residents stopped short of commenting on speculation that their former mayor’s close friendship with a man who stayed frequently at her home in Brussels went any further. “That is their business. It is their private life which they have a right to,” said a retired teacher invoking the French respect for *la vie privée*.

☐ Web rush: The Internet sites (http://www.europarl.eu.int/experts and http://www2.europarl.eu.int/experts) carrying the report on fraud and mismanagement in the Commission registered more than one million hits in their first day, a European Parliament official said yesterday. “We have not seen traffic like this since the launch of the (Parliament) site,” Peter Papamikail said. *(Reuters)*





Chirac accused in sleaze scandal

By Adam Sage

PRESIDENT Chirac was thrust to the centre of a judicial fraud investigation in Paris yesterday as the laxity that has characterised French public life came under scrutiny.

The allegations made against M Chirac echo the scandal that hit Edith Cresson in Brussels, with both accused of cronyism and a willful disregard of taxpayers' money.

The latest chapter in a long inquiry into phantom jobs at the Paris town hall reminded voters that M Chirac is a child of the same culture that produced Mme Cresson and his predecessor as head of state, François Mitterrand.

It is a culture dominated by a few people who have worked their way through the meritocratic education system to form a tight-knit caste that believes in its own superiority.

That belief is widely seen as responsible for the sleaze that engulfed Mme Cresson and her fellow Socialists at the start of the 1990s and that is now lapping around the President's Gaullist movement.

Yesterday the newspaper *Libération* said that an investigating magistrate had obtained a highly compromising letter written by M Chirac when he was Mayor of Paris in 1993. In it, he is said to have asked for the promotion of a woman employed by his Gaullist party but paid by the Paris town hall.

The document suggests, the newspaper said, that M Chirac was aware of the phantom-job scandal that is the subject of an inquiry by the Parisian judge, Patrick Desmure.

The scandal broke when a former Paris employee, Georges Quémar, said the council had funded several hundred people who worked for centre-right political parties and never set foot in the town hall.



EU HO / AP

The condemned Commission gathers round the oval table for its weekly Wednesday session, where it agreed to announce that it had "no intention of remaining in office a moment longer than we have to"

Top table prolongs death agony

The masters of Europe go through the motions of power, Charles Bremner reports

It could have been any Wednesday at the Breydel building, the Brussels pile recast this week as Europe's Augean stables. At the entrance, drivers polished limousines in milky sunshine while, upstairs on the 12th floor, their masters sat down around their big oval table for their regular weekly session.

Rushing in, Neil Kinnock, Britain's junior commissioner, tried to inject a sense of reality. "It is not business as usual. It can't be. We resigned on Monday night," he said.

Item number one on the agenda was certainly irregular. After a *tour de table*, a key European Union ritual in which everyone airs a position, Jacques Santer and his team agreed to announce that they had "no intention of remaining in office a moment longer than we have to". Out of decency, however, they would avoid any new political initiatives.

Fresh from its visit to the grave, the "college of commissioners" proceeded to business, such as approving aid to a Spanish shipbuilder.

One item did convey the delicate predicament of the 20 august figures who were supposed to have become ex-commissioners when they all resigned on Monday. This was a revamped proposal to set up an independent unit to pursue fraud in the Commission, in succession to the unit which failed to pursue fraud in the Commission. The new unit will go under the name of Olaf, which has nothing to do with the spirit of Nordic probity. It is just a French acronym for Office for Fighting Fraud.

Three commissioners were dispatched to the basement to present their decisions to "the sharks", the crush of reporters and television cameras which has spent the week chronicling the supposed death throes of the Santer administration. As the hottest show in Europe, the media room has been augmented by an unusual crowd of voyeurs, including officials who have been transfixed by the crucifixion of their bosses and Mr Santer's unrepentant self-mutilation on Tuesday.

You did not need a background in Kremlinology to decode the message in the line-up. After the disaster of his back-from-the-abyss outing on Tuesday, Mr Santer was nowhere to be seen. "We had to keep him hidden, we can't take any more incompetence," said a senior aide to one of the commissioners now in open rebellion against their boss.

Instead, the job of keeping the Commission afloat in public had been handed to Karel van Miert, the pugnacious Belgian Commissioner who is responsible for competition. "We have a duty to carry on," he said. "Just because the Commission has resigned does not mean we have to block all business."

The Belgian, who enjoys wide respect, was managing fine until he handed over to Anita Gradin, the anti-fraud commissioner whose failure to pursue skulduggery in the Commission was nailed by the outside inquiry.

Visibly uncomfortable, Mrs Gradin, whose Swedish Government has this week disowned her, then put her foot in it by explaining the merits of the new independent fraud unit. This, she stressed, would, er ... be appointed by the Commission and would operate within it. Senior officials rolled their eyes. "Why did they let her open her mouth?" groaned one Eurocrat.

Mario Monti, the Italian (ex)-commissioner in charge of taxes, added to the levity with some elegant irony. The decision to desist from launching any initiatives would, unfortunately, mean that it would not suggest a delay in the abolition of duty-free, he said. Signor Monti, of course, never had any such aim. He has been infuriating Britain and half-a-dozen other member states for months by refusing demands to call for a change of heart on eliminating the duty-free system. A Commission proposal is the vital first step for any such action.

After a deft compliment to the strongman qualities of Mr van Miert, Signor Monti insisted that they had to face up to their responsibilities to stay at their desks. "We are not physical fugitives," he said.

Upstairs on the 12th floor, aides were coaching Mr Santer on how not to mess up his latest outing — an appearance on the BBC *Nine O'Clock News* last night. Not everything, it must be said, was Mr Santer's fault. He was still fuming yesterday over a disastrous error by an interpreter on Tuesday. This led to much of the British media quoting him as claiming that the auditors had declared him "whiter than white". In fact, he had been talking, in French, about a specific allegation against his family and what he really said was, "they completely cleared me on that". The damage had, however, been done.

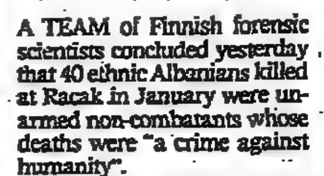
The routine of the phantom Commission is now likely to continue for weeks, if not months, as EU states wrangle over the succession.

OLEG POPOV / REUTERS

Ethnic Albanian women mourn at the funeral in Grajkovac in Kosovo yesterday of four relations who were murdered three days ago

Kosovo killings 'a crime against humanity'

FROM ANTHONY LOYD IN PRISTINA



A TEAM of Finnish forensic scientists concluded yesterday that 40 ethnic Albanians killed at Racak in January were unarmed non-combatants whose deaths were "a crime against humanity".

However, Dr Helena Ranta, who headed the team appointed by the European Union, refused to call the killings a massacre or to blame Serbian security forces — as did William Walker, head of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe's monitoring mission here in January.

Hamstrung by bitter internal EU divisions, the sensitivity of the continuing Kosovo peace talks amid escalating warfare, and Belgrade's limited tolerance to their presence, the Finns also refused to divulge precise details of how the Albanians died.

Allegations are emerging, however, that a second report by the Finns on their post-mortem findings was suppressed a week ago at the behest of Germany, which holds the EU presidency.



Ranta: second opinions "always a nightmare"

"The first report was a technical evaluation of post mortems for the EU, the Serb investigative judge and the OSCE," said a senior foreign diplomat in Pristina.

"The second report, due for the OSCE, drew conclusions, among them that — based on the bullet trajectories — many victims died either kneeling or lying on the ground. A week ago the EU presidency said that that report should not be released."

The massacre at Racak, about 12 miles south of Pristina on January 15, was the worst single atrocity in the Kosovo conflict and galvanised the international community into laying the foundations for the current peace talks.

In response to Kosovo Liberation Army activity, Serbian special forces and police units swept through the village early in the morning. It appears the KLA had withdrawn from the village, and the Serbs came upon groups of unarmed Albanian men.

"Unofficially, I have been told nothing contradictory to what we have already discovered," the diplomat said. "A bunch of unarmed men were taken by the Serbs up the hill and discovered in a pile dead the next day."

At first, the Yugoslav authorities claimed that only 15 men had died and that all were armed "terrorists". They later changed their account to say that other bodies had been brought into the area by the Albanians, who had stripped them of KLA uniform and dressed them in civilian clothes.

It was a week before the Finns were allowed to carry out their first post-mortem examination, by which time the Serbs had already performed their own operations on 16 of the dead.

"If a body has already been once autopsied, it is not that easy to reconstruct," Dr Ranta said. "To give a second opinion is a nightmare for every pathologist."

The Finns were allowed no information from the scene of the killings, and some of the bodies had been shot up to 30 times, and thus were so badly damaged that individual bullet trajectories were difficult to plot.

The team did conclude that there had been no post-killing mutilation of the bodies, and that any injuries suggesting so had been caused by dogs.

Serb stand, page 24

Nato seeks unity on bombing Serbs

BY MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE EDITOR

NATO meets tomorrow to discuss appropriate military measures after yesterday's statement by Christopher Hill, the American mediator at the Paris peace talks, that there is no prospect of making progress with the Serbs.

The North Atlantic Council will try, in Brussels, to guage alliance views on airstrikes. Although all members agreed to the idea in October, France and Italy have indicated a growing reluctance to launch a bombing campaign. However, with the Serb delegation now trying to unpick even the political elements of the agreement approved in principle at Rambouillet, those alliance Governments which are adopting a tougher approach, such as the United States and Britain, hope to swing round the doubters.

Last night Mr Hill said that the Serbs were still refusing to negotiate on implementing a Kosovo autonomy plan. Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, attends today's peace talks session, with Hubert Védrine, his French counterpart, to see if there is any point in continuing the negotiations.

Six Olympics chiefs ousted in bribes scandal

Samaranch survives latest purge, writes **John Goodbody** in Lausanne

SIX members were yesterday expelled from the International Olympic Committee (IOC) over the "votes-for-favours" scandal in the biggest crisis in the movement's 106 years.

In all, 20 per cent of the membership of 118 has resigned, been expelled or warned about their conduct since December, but Juan Antonio Samaranch, the IOC president, still received an overwhelming vote of confidence in a secret ballot yesterday. He won 86 of the 90 votes cast.

As members left the Palace de Beaulieu many were upset after the seven-hour session. Shunichiro Okano, an IOC member, described the expulsions as making the day "the most painful of my life". The six expelled were smuggled out and driven to Geneva airport without speaking to the media. They had pleaded to remain members of the most exclusive club in world sport, but were overruled because of their alleged improper behaviour in receiving money or favours from Salt Lake City when it bid successfully for the 2002 Winter Olympics.

The six were Agustin Arroyo of Ecuador, Zein el Abdin Gadir of Sudan, Jean-Claude Ganga of Congo, Lamine Keita of Mali, Sergio Santander Fantini of Chile and Paul Wallwork of Samoa. Mr Wallwork polled the highest in favour of his remaining, receiving 19 votes with 64 against.

Four other members had already resigned from the IOC after acknowledging their own misbehaviour.

There remains one outstanding case: that of Dr Un-Yong Kim of South Korea, the president of the World Taekwondo Federation and an IOC vice-president. He is still under investigation for alleged malpractice and has received "the most serious of warnings".

Asked if there would be any further developements, Dick Pound, another IOC vice-president who led the inquiry, replied: "Stay tuned."

Mr Pound and Dr Kim are rivals to succeed Señor Samaranch when he steps down in 2001 after 22 years. The pressure is said to have got to Dr Kim, who has wide support in the Third World. During an executive board meeting on Tuesday he is believed to have squared up to François Carrard, the IOC director-general, adopting a taekwondo stance. M Carrard described the episode yesterday as a "minor incident".

There is a feeling that Third World members had been targeted in the inquiry. Jean-Claude Ganga claimed that there was a plot to get revenge for his having led the boycott of black African nations at the 1976 Olympics.

However, Marc Hodler, the most senior IOC member and the man who blew the whistle on his colleagues last December, said: "It was a good day. I believe justice has been done."

Pal Schmitt of Hungary, the senior vice-president and twice Olympic fencing champion, said: "This was an extraordinary session and it aroused extraordinary feelings. We have the inside strength to renovate our committee." Asked what lessons should be learnt from the episode, he said: "The number one is that we have to come down to earth."

Craig Reedie, one of Britain's two IOC members, said: "The vote reinforced my view that the overwhelming number of members want Samaranch to remain."

The IOC members received a letter from the Princess Royal, who is on a tour of the Far East. She suggested that international federation presidents should not be members of the IOC because there was a conflict of interests.



The six victims: top left, Sergio Santander Fantini of Chile, Jean-Claude Ganga of Congo, Lamine Keita of Mali. Above: Agustin Arroyo of Ecuador, Zein el Abdin Gadir of Sudan and Paul Wallwork of Samoa



LINKS

http://www.slc2002.org/ — The official site for the Salt Lake Olympic games.
http://www.olympic.org/ — The Official site of the Olympic Committee.
http://www.sydney.olympic.org/ — The Syndey Olympic games

FOX PHOTOS



The Olympic flame is carried into the Berlin stadium at the start of the 1936 Games

Gifts from the Nazis lured Games to Berlin in 1936

FROM ROGER BOYES IN BONN

FLATTERY, cash gifts and paid holidays were offered by the Nazis to powerful members of the Olympic movement in their successful attempt to lure the 1936 Games to Berlin.

Hitler was determined to make an ideological spectacle of the Olympics — they were supposed to demonstrate the superiority of the "Aryan race" — and no price was too high to secure the support of the Olympic guardians.

As it turned out, the Nazis did not have to try too hard. According to research by Professor Hans Joachim Teichler, of Potsdam University, the International Olympic Committee was easily swayed by the Berlin bid despite a vociferous "Boycott Germany" campaign.

Baron Pierre de Coubertin, founder of the modern Olympics, was given 10,000 marks after the Germans heard that he was strapped for cash. The French and Norwegians had already given him smaller sums, but in a memorandum (seen by Professor Teichler) from an under-secretary in the Interior Ministry to Hitler's chancellery it was made plain that Germany should be more generous. "It would make an incomparably strong impression if the Führer could make available an honorary donation for the founder of the Olympics," the memorandum said.

Hitler responded to the suggestion immediately. Coubertin had supported the Berlin Olympics bid all along, believing that Hitler wanted to make a bridge between the classical Olympics and the modern movement.

The Germans were grateful. The baron and his family were offered an all-expenses-paid health cure in Baden-Baden as "a sign of gratitude for his supportive part in the German bid".

WORLD IN BRIEF

US general faces jail over affairs

Washington: The first US Army general to be court martialled in 47 years has pleaded guilty to having affairs with the wives of four subordinate officers (Damian Whitworth writes). David Hale, who retired as a major-general last year but was recalled to be tried, had consistently protested his innocence. He has admitted seven counts of "conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman" and one of making false official statements on the eve of his court martial in return for a more lenient sentence. Hale, 53, faces up to 11 years in a military prison as well as a possible loss of rank and retirement pay. He has been committed to a general court martial, which is reserved for the military's most serious offences.

Artistic licence

Rome: One panel of Gaetano Previati's triptych, *Fall of the Angels*, hung upside down for three months in Rome's leading modern art museum until a group of students spotted the blunder. *Il Messaggero* reported that four female students visiting the National Gallery of Modern Art noticed that the 1912 triptych, which was hung in December, did not match an illustration in the museum guide. Previati was one of the leading artists of the Milan Divisionist school. *(Reuter)*

Strike halts Quito

Quito: Ecuador descended into social and administrative chaos as millions joined a general strike that paralysed transport and trade, while violent street protests echoed demands for the resignation of President Mahuad (Gabriella Gamini writes). Tens of thousands went into the streets of leading cities, many burning effigies, to protest against the President's harsh austerity measures, including a 165 per cent rise in the price of petrol, after a $1.2 billion budget deficit.

Rabbi guilty of fraud



Jerusalem: Rabbi Aryeh Deri, right, Israel's leading political kingmaker, was found guilty of bribery, fraud and breaching public trust in a verdict that leading religious Jews said could provoke civil war between those of Oriental and those of European origin (Christopher Walker writes). Supporters of Deri, the leader of Shas, Israel's third largest political party, condemned "a travesty of justice".

Police chief resigns

Lisbon: Fernando Negrão, head of Portugal's criminal police, was forced to quit after leaks over an inquiry into alleged fraud at a private university suspected of links to Freemasonry (Alison Roberts writes). The last straw was his statement to a television reporter that a report by the secret services, whose existence had been denied, was circulating within his force.

Bitter pill to swallow

Hanover: A German man has been fined for selling blue "Fisherman's Friend" pills claiming they were Viagra sexual potency pills. He persuaded 34 men to part with £2,067 by offering the tablets through the Internet. They complained when they did not have the desired effect, police said. The man was fined £689 and his computer was seized. *(Reuters)*

Weary America set to kill off ‘too political’ independent prosecutors

Attorney-General disillusioned by $50m Starr inquiries, reports Ben Macintyre

AMERICA'S top legal official yesterday sounded the death knell for the statute that enabled Kenneth Starr, the independent prosecutor, to bring about the investigation, prosecution and impeachment of President Clinton.

Janet Reno, the US Attorney-General, told a Senate hearing that she had decided to oppose renewing the independent counsel statute, passed in the wake of the Watergate scandal to create a powerful and independent legal tool for investigating senior office-holders. She said that the process of appointing such investigators had become hopelessly politicised.

According to Justice Department officials, Ms Reno, once a staunch defender of the independent prosecutors' office, had decided that several inquiries, most notably that of Mr Starr, had spun out of control and that the statute was "structurally flawed".

It has become deeply unpopular with most Democratic and Republican leaders in Congress, and the Attorney-General's opposition represents the death blow; it is likely to be scrapped when its term expires on June 30. No fewer than seven independent prosecutors have spent $70 million (£43.2 million) investigating Mr Clinton and various members of his Administration, persuading most Democrats of the view, long held by Republicans after investigations during the Reagan-Bush years, that the office has become an expensive and uncontrollable anachronism.

The statute was passed 21 years ago, after Richard Nixon fired the Watergate investigator Archibald Cox, to allow objective, apolitical prosecutors to conduct investigations into suspect activities by top-level officials within the Administration. Instead, opponents argue, the office has become unwieldy, unfair and open to abuse.

Ms Reno is believed to be particularly frustrated with Mr Starr, who spent five years and some $50 million investigating Mr Clinton, beginning with the Whitewater real estate deal but finally focusing on the Monica Lewinsky affair.

According to officials in her office, Ms Reno felt that individual prosecutors were liable to become loose cannons. "Some of the special prosecutors ... ended up taking a very simple, narrow issue and turned it into a long, drawn-out investigation that often seemed to stray from the original mandate," one official said.

The existing statute requires the Attorney-General to refer investigations to external prosecutors whenever specific and credible charges are made against top officials. It was designed to keep the Justice Department away from political controversy, but since the Attorney-General is the sole authority able to decide when an independent investigation is warranted, it had precisely the reverse effect.

Ms Reno's opposition represents a remarkable personal *volte-face*. In 1993 she argued that, while the independent counsel statute had certain flaws, it was necessary and liable to foster public confidence.

MI6 ‘proposed Iraqi coup’ to topple Saddam

FROM JAMES BONE IN NEW YORK

BRITISH intelligence encouraged the United States to seek a "quick, simple coup" in Iraq through an opposition group that Britain had created and which later mounted a failed effort to overthrow President Saddam Hussein, a former senior United Nations inspector claims.

Scott Ritter, writing in his new book, *Endgame*, says that in the mid-1990s MI6 pushed the Central Intelligence Agency to shift its support from the Iraqi National Congress, which was recruiting an army in Kurdish-held northern Iraq, to the rival Iraqi National Accord (INA), which was based in Jordan.

"More and more, the CIA was being wooed by the British secret intelligence service, or MI6, which proposed a quick, simple coup, orchestrated from within by military officers close to Saddam," he writes. "Such was the offer being presented by the rival opposition group, the INA. The CIA began supporting both factions, but putting the bulk of its effort behind the INA."

Mr Ritter describes the INA as a "creation of the British MI6" and says it consists of "former military personnel who had defected from Iraq and who were hoping to take advantage of their old contacts at home". Although the INC had amassed 10,000 men to stage a ground war from northern Iraq, the CIA changed policy on the eve of the planned battle in March 1995 and told the group's London-based leader, Ahmed Chalabi, that it would not provide military assistance.

Mr Chalabi launched the attack anyway, but his Kurdish allies split and an Iraqi counter-offensive routed his forces. In early 1996, the CIA was ordered to develop a "quick-fix" solution to get rid of Saddam before the American presidential elections the following November and "the only option was the INA".

Ritter: notes failure of CIA and MI6 coup bids

The book records the INA's failed attempt to get members of the Republican Guards to stage a coup — a plot that was foiled in June 1996 when the Iraqis intercepted CIA-supplied communications gear.

Mr Ritter says he suspects that a UN inspections mission at the time, known as Unscom 150, might have been used as cover by the CIA to help to execute the planned coup. Unknowingly, he led his team against the same Special Republican Guard facilities involved in the plot. The team included nine "CIA paramilitary covert operators", including an operative he calls "Moe Dobbs", a US Army Special Forces veteran who had played a critical role supporting the Contras in Nicaragua and had spent the Gulf War in Syria directing Arab agents inside Iraq.

"There is virtually no chance that opposition groups could overthrow Saddam," Mr Ritter writes. "Attempts by the CIA and the British MI6 to orchestrate a coup from within all met with disaster."

BOBBY YIP / REUTERS



Jackie Chan, centre, the Hong Kong film star, is joined by Tony Leung, left, a fellow actor, and Tsui Hark, film director, at a demonstration calling on the Government to take tougher action against illegal copying of their work. The territory's 73 cinemas closed for the day in support of the protest. Industry leaders say piracy, rife in Hong Kong, is costing them 60 per cent of their turnover and threatening thousands of jobs

First black grandmaster learnt chess from library book

BY JAMES BONE

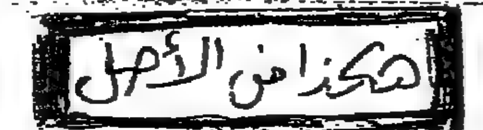
A JAMAICAN immigrant in New York who taught himself chess from a library book and on the Internet has become the world's first black grandmaster. Maurice Ashley became the 470th person to receive the game's highest rank when he won enough points in a tournament game at the Manhattan Chess Club to qualify for the honour. "I'm numb from the neck down and giddy from the neck up," Mr Ashley, 32, who runs an after-school chess club for youngsters in Harlem, said.

He started playing at what is considered the late age of 14 when a friend at his high school in Brooklyn challenged him to a game and "totally destroyed" him. Determined to salvage his pride, Mr Ashley got a chess book from the library and pored over strategies and gambits. He joined his school's chess club, but was not good enough to make the first team, but went on to become head of his college chess association.

He also joined the Black Bear School of Chess, a group of young black chess fanatics in Brooklyn. Mr Ashley coached two Harlem youth teams to win three national championships, and three of his players won individual championships. Two years ago he began training to become a grandmaster, spending six hours a day studying moves on his computer and live games on the Internet.

"My success will show black youngsters that they can be successful at any intellectual pursuit," he said.





Eritreans claim border rout of Ethiopian force

FROM ROBIN LODGE IN NAIROBI

ERITREA said yesterday that it had routed a force of 40,000 Ethiopian troops in three days of border fighting this week, leaving hundreds of bodies and 50 burnt-out tanks scattered around the battlefield.

The latest clashes between the two sides, who resumed fighting along the disputed border last month after an eight-month lull, took place on the Tsorona front, 60 miles southwest of the Eritrean capital, Asmara, where the Ethiopians have been trying to retake territory seized by the Eritreans last year.

A similar Ethiopian offensive last month at Badme, about 100 miles to the northwest, succeeded in driving Eritrean forces several miles back, albeit at a heavy cost.

With both sides dug into trenches in mountainous terrain, attackers are exposed to withering fire and almost certain to suffer heavy casualties. The indications are that this is what happened on the Tsorona front, but that the Ethiopians failed to seize the Eritrean trenches. Journalists taken to the front by the Eritreans on Tuesday reported seeing at least 300 Ethiopian bodies and scores of destroyed tanks, many still in flames.

An Ethiopian government spokeswoman, Selome Tadesse, dismissed the scenes displayed by the Eritreans as a public relations exercise.

She said: "Whatever the Eritrean Government might assert, whatever evidence it might produce to back up its incredible assertions, one can be fairly sure that it is just the latest round in the Government's campaign of deception and fabrication."

She added that many Eritreans had died in the fighting. The Eritreans gave no details of their own losses.

Both sides have accepted a peace plan by the Organisation of African Unity, calling for the withdrawal of troops from the disputed area pending mediation. The Eritreans have since called for a ceasefire, but the Ethiopians insist that they first withdraw from territory around Zalambesse on the Tsorona front.



SAMI SALLINEN / REUTERS

Bodies of Ethiopian troops lie scattered on an embankment in front of Eritrean defences in Belessa on the Tsorona front after a failed offensive

Suu Kyi's husband denied last visa

BY MICHAEL DYNES

MICHAEL ARIS, the British husband of Aung San Suu Kyi, the Burmese opposition leader, is pleading with the military authorities in Rangoon for a visa to visit his wife after being diagnosed as seriously ill with cancer.

Mr Aris, a fellow of St Antony's College, Oxford, who married in 1972, has been told that he is suffering from prostate cancer which has spread to his spine and lungs. He is not expected to live long, sources close to the family said.

It is understood that Mr Aris is desperate to see his wife one last time. But the military regime, which has refused to issue him with a visa for the past three years, is insisting his wife be the one to travel.

Daw Suu Kyi, who won the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize for her courage in defying military rule, has applied for a visa on her husband's behalf, but there has been no response. She has not left the country for 11 years, fearing that she would never be allowed back.

The state-controlled media have over the past 12 months called repeatedly for Daw Suu Kyi to leave or be expelled.

Organs of orphans 'sold to wealthy'

Inquiry launched into why children in Egypt died after being sent to private clinics, writes **Jim Muir**

EGYPTIAN prosecutors yesterday began an investigation into allegations that 25 children died after a charity sold them to private hospitals for use in organ transplants.

The allegations were made in a complaint laid before the public prosecutor by MPs representing Menoufieh district in the Nile delta, where the abuses are said to have taken place.

The MPs claimed that 25 out of 32 children taken in by the Association for the Care of Abandoned Children died during a three-month period last year, after their organs were sold to rich patients for up to £20,000. The charity, which runs a facility known locally as the Foundlings' Village in Quweisna, was set up to look after illegitimate children abandoned by their mothers.

Egyptian officials yesterday confirmed that there had been abnormal deaths among children cared for by the association, but they denied that transplants were involved.

The Ministry of Social Affairs confirmed that last year it investigated two related Menoufieh charities, one run by a former television producer and the other by his wife, after complaints of irregularities, including the death of an unspecified number of children and the falsification of at least one death certificate.

The ministry's investigations concluded that the deaths were caused by gross negligence. "But all the deaths were from natural causes, there were no transplants, and the hospital records prove this," Anwar Sharif, an official spokesman, said yesterday.

The reports also concluded that both charities were guilty of financial and administrative irregularities. Their boards of directors were both dissolved in November and December on the orders of the local Governor, Adli Hussein. He also issued a denial last night that the children died as the victims of organ transplants.

"Transplanting organs as the MPs claim requires very specific medical conditions and facilities — it could not possibly be done here in Menoufieh," he added.

But one of the MPs, Ibrahim Genainah, repeated the accusations. "I am fully convinced that the children died because of transplants," he said. "The serial numbers on the death certificates of the 25 dead children were all in sequence. That does not make sense. What we say is that there has been a crime."

The allegations came as parliamentarians were divided over controversial draft legislation which would permit organ transplants from newly-dead donors under strictly controlled conditions.

At present, such operations are illegal in Egypt except for cornea grafts and kidney and bone marrow transplants from live donors — provided no money changes hands and the recipient is Egyptian.

The head of the Egyptian Medical Association, Dr Hamdi al-Sayyid — himself an MP and a keen advocate of the transplant Bill — said yesterday he believed the allegations about the children were part of a campaign to head off the legislation. Some Islamists believe any kind of transplant breaches religious law.

"I am very sceptical about the accusations and I don't believe it," he said. "I think they have brought this up now because of the debate over the new Bill. We are responsible for the medical profession in this country, and we have a detailed list of every transplant that takes place."

□ *Jim Muir is the BBC's Middle East correspondent.*

Boesak found guilty of stealing children's cash

FROM SAM KILEY IN JOHANNESBURG

Allan Boesak, who enjoyed a lavish lifestyle, leaves court yesterday

ALLAN BOESAK, the South African cleric and close friend of Nelson Mandela, was convicted yesterday of stealing donations that were intended for child victims of apartheid.

Boesak, once a leading cleric in the anti-apartheid struggle, was convicted of three charges of theft and one of fraud. He stole $72,000 (£44,000) of a $200,000 donation to his Foundation for Peace and Justice by the American singer Paul Simon, said Judge John Foxcroft at Cape Town High Court.

He also defrauded the Swedish Government of $226,000, which he used to build a studio for his second wife, Elna, a former television personality. He also stole from his own charity.

He was acquitted on 23 other charges of fraud and theft and will be sentenced next week. In his ruling, Mr Foxcroft said: "The accused wrongfully and unlawfully appropriated money intended for children of South Africa. He treated the money as his own."

Boesak sat stony-faced as the verdict was read out. His many friends in the ruling African National Congress, who had supported his claims of innocence and had cleared him of any wrongdoing in an inquiry, were absent. His mentor, President Mandela, last year made several impassioned appeals for donations to a defence fund for Boesak.

Prosecutors, who endured criticism from ANC stalwarts, said Boesak used the money to fund a lavish lifestyle.

The verdict comes as Justice Willem Heath, who heads investigations into corruption, faces unprecedented ministerial criticism for his apparent success in exposing graft. The attacks have led to dismay and accusations among South Africans that the ANC is presiding over a moral decline in public life.

Big wheels don't drive Fiestas

We are a nation obsessed by rank and place. In suburbia there is no better indicator of class than your car, says Celia Brayfield


Washing the car draws the neighbours' attention to it. The consumption of polish correlates to the value of the house — the richer the family, the more they polish their car

Britain has a new class system. For the past couple of years we have been in social anarchy. We have struggled to comprehend the poshness of Posh Spice, the elitism of Beryl Bainbridge, the unsportsmanlike actions of the Chelsea defender Graeme Le Saux.

Today accent, manners, education, heritage or use of fish knives are meaningless. The post-Marxian eat-the-rich snobbery that valued a regional accent, rudeness and lack of education as sure-fire signs of personal integrity got its UB40 with old Labour. Our class system runs counter to income, so the marketing bands ABC1 to C2DE, based on earnings, never really worked for us.

We became a nation of niche markets, cult followings, microtrends, mini-celebs and managed information in which, for a while, nobody knew who they were any more, let alone how to express their identity. The British can't handle this: we need to define ourselves in hierarchical terms. This is about security, not domination. We want a system of rank not so that we can be high in it, but so that we can know our place. Then we're happy.

> Executives won't be seen in anything less than a Lexus

Roll on the car. Vehicles are the new class indicator, and *Brookside Nation*, a survey of suburban attitudes conducted by the advertising agency Abbott Mead Vickers, proves it. Listening to Budget analysts last week, it was clear the agency was spot on. Every reporter used car ownership to evoke a social grade. A tabloid took White Van Man to Downing Street to park outside No 11, while the financial supplements worried that Mondeo Man was being squeezed until his trims squeaked. Commentators opined that Mr and Ms BMW would have to forgo their upgrade next year, and gave the Range Rovers new tips on tax avoidance.

The agency, desperate to map out some kind of mass market among our choice-crazed population, focused on the six million people living on new housing estates. With a statistical analysis backed up by focus groups spread over the South East, Midlands and North, they probed the tastes and values of estate dwellers and discovered that the car said it all. In the new Britain you are what you drive. It really is that simple. The Brooksiders held it to be an article of faith that "you can judge a person by the car they drive" and passionately denied "that a car is just something that gets you from A to B".

The great thing about cars is that by adding and subtracting gadgets you can create a caste system more intricate than that of India. It is widely believed in the motor trade that models sold in Britain come in more variations than anywhere else in Europe, because of our desperate need to display our precise social status. The survey found the Brooksiders were acutely aware of every detail and nuance of car design — the letters after the model name on the boot conveyed as much social context as Jeeves could deduce from the buttons on a Savile Row suit.

In new neighbourhoods built American-style without fences or hedges, displaying the car is an essential ritual. None of the folk in focus groups kept their cars in their garages; they kept them in their drives, where they were lovingly and regularly groomed. Why would people who could easily run to a platinum token for the car wash waste their precious leisure time messing around with hoses, sponges and bottles of car polish? They definitely preferred to wash their cars by hand, and even washed them in the rain.

Washing the car was clearly a way of drawing the neighbours' attention to it. The consumption of car polish correlated to the value of the house — the richer the family, the more they polished their car. People who did not polish their cars were deemed nutters. White Van Man, lacking a driveway, compensates by turning on his radio to blast thundering hip-hop down the street while he's busy with the leather.

People discuss each other's cars exactly as the apostles of Nancy Mitford and John Betjeman once talked about toilets and note-paper versus lavatories and writing paper. One car per adult is required and wealthier families are twice as likely as other people to have three cars per household. Newness is all, and people who drive old vehicles are seen as morally unsound. Children are given cars as soon as they get their provisional licences.

EAMONN CLARKE / ALL ACTION


You can tell he's posh: David Beckham and his new Jaguar

This class system is largely untouched by feminism. In Brookside Nation the man of the house is the breadwinner and drives, or aspires to, a Rover 600, Mercedes, Range Rover or BMW, while his wife will fall behind in her career at the start of their family and is content to sling her gym bag into a frivolous 4x4, a Suzuki Vitara or Rav 4. One of the agency's focus groups was fixated by a particular neighbour, judged a total slapper for having a Ford Fiesta and living with a man who drove a 5-series BMW. Who did she think she was? demanded the goodwives of Brookside Nation. "Not that there's anything wrong with Ford Fiestas as such..."

This culture first took root in the heartland of the motor industry, the Midlands, and its spread has been reinforced by American assimilation of British business. Company-car ownership creates micro-cultures in all workplaces. Employees value themselves according to what they can choose from the corporate fleet. It is a reliable status system, but not proof against social climbers. Some companies operate an overt dividend system, letting people pay extra to upgrade a vehicle. Others operate the same policy covertly; only the fleet manager knows which executives have paid to drive something more flash than their entitlement. Strong men weep if their company cars are downgraded, though some camouflage their income by driving down — like a fortysomething marketing hotshot trying to hide his age by choosing the same plain Vauxhall as his twentysomething rivals.

For maximum status a car's value must be displayed externally but you can make only so many statements with alloy wheels and xenon headlamps. At BMW, where 65 to 70 per cent of business in Britain involves company cars, the letters SE, for special equipment, are used on the most sought-after models. This allows invisible extras such as air-conditioning to be advertised.

The new class system has no ceiling; whatever your status, the need to show it never wanes. A chauffeur who drives chief executives from one boardroom to another knows men who refuse to go to meetings if the car assigned to them is "anything less than a Lexus or Jaguar".

The arts seem to be the only corner of society outside this system. Brookside Nation is an arts-free zone — people don't own books, don't go to cinema or theatre, don't hang pictures because the nails spoil the plaster. Houseproud though they are, design means nothing to them. So cars are their only means of expressing themselves.

But in the arts self-expression is a way of life, and car culture doesn't count. "It's almost the reverse," says a film art director who until recently drove a 14-year-old Range Rover and had a museum-age Morris Estate for his wife. "You're not deemed a failure if you turn up in an old car. In fact, you don't want to drive anything ostentatious or expensive, it makes people envious. It's unwise in such an unstable business."

So that's all right then. I have an eight-year-old Daihatsu Fourtrak TX. I know my place. I look up to him, because he has a new BMW 750 iL, but look down on her, because she has a Ford Fiesta. A nasty couple of years there but it's all sorted now. Phew.

Fighting the plastic pirates

Clare Hogan lost £2,500 from her credit card while it stayed in her purse

NIGEL HILLIER


Clean swipe: make sure your card has not been read twice

The first time it happened I nearly had a heart attack. In five days A.N. Other had spent £2,500 on my credit card, buying clothes, shoes, a bicycle and sports and computer equipment from shops in Ilford, East London. My card had not left my purse.

When it happened a second time last week, six years later, I was more sanguine. This time it was just £10.95 and the card company phoned me on the day that the transaction went through. The man said he thought that my card had been "compromised". Had I bought anything through an Internet site in California?

Yet again my card had not been stolen, so how was the company alerted to the fraud so quickly?

My first thought was that since I am a shopper of habit — train fares, Sussex Farm Foods, my local garden nursery — something as exciting as an Internet purchase would stand out. I was right. I am a boring shopper, but it didn't take an army of bank staff to sift through individual accounts to find out.

A year ago my bank took delivery of a computer system called Falcon and it has been watching me closely ever since. Joy Przeczek, the senior manager of fraud strategy and card services at NatWest, says that the bank has a profile of the spending habits of each customer and "a profile of a fraud spend". All day, every day "the computer compares the two and we contact the cardholder if we have any doubts". NatWest has about 16 million credit and debit card transactions a month and the new system looks at about eight million of them.

According to the Association of Payment Clearing Services, card fraud in Britain cost £135 million last year.

"All the major issuers have Falcon or something similar," says Ms Przeczek. "Because criminals are getting more and more organised, you are only as good as your weakest link. All financial institutions in Britain share information on fraud because it is a non-competitive issue. America has had something like Falcon for about two years and Germany and France have installed it recently."

How were the criminals able to get the details of my card? No one could give me a definite answer but, since it is a gold card with a fairly high credit limit, it must be on any criminal's wish list. At least I got my money back in full on both occasions.

Fraud falls into several categories: counterfeiting cards; lost or stolen cards; card not present (when you pay by mail, telephone or on the Internet); and card not received (when your new card never reaches you).

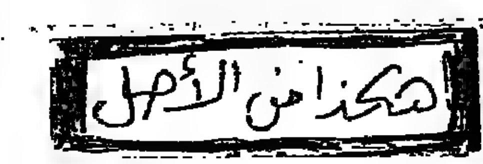
Counterfeiting cards — known as skimming — is a growing problem for banks. Criminals can either alter existing cards — this despite the fact that at least seven safeguards, such as the hologram, have been built into the card — or create new cards with your details on them. Counterfeiting is linked to international criminals, including Triad gangs.

One reason why major issuers suggest that you keep your card in sight, particularly when paying, is that retailers with criminal links can swipe a card through a payment machine twice — once for your bill, the second time on a different machine that will take all your details. These can then be passed on to counterfeiters who will make a new card. Because the card is new, anyone can sign it and use it.

After the first credit card fraud I was told by someone in the banking industry that some counterfeit cards were brought over from the Far East and could be bought for £50 each. Buyers were told to shop for up to ten days and then to throw them away.

Ms Przeczek says that banks are making the most of Falcon. Added to that, in the next two or three years "we expect to start rolling out chip and smart cards that will be even more secure". Has the Internet made things easier for criminals? "The number of disputed transactions is increasing," she says.

When I told friends about the call from the bank, everyone had a story to tell: of an uncle whose gold card had been used to buy a Rolex in Hong Kong, and a stolen card that was used a year later. I expect the next criminal using my card to do something a little more spectacular, if only to liven up my buying profile.



Treating a stammer



Dr Thomas Stuttaford reports on a speech therapy centre; why washing up is so vital to those with allergies; mental illness and brain scans; planning for a millennial baby; and eczema

Michael Palin recently met a taxi driver who was unusually silent. But even the most reticent of drivers needs to ask for a fare. Palin noticed that he stammered, and politely suggested that his life might be easier if he attended the Michael Palin Centre for Stammering. This has been developed by the Association for Research into Stammering Children in partnership with Camden and Islington Community Health Services.

Palin's father was a stammerer. Not only did the driver stammer but also his wife and two of his children. The centre, which normally treats people aged from two to 18, believes in treating the whole family. The driver is therefore to be enrolled with his children and wife for speech therapy.

The belief that stammering children are anxious and stammer because they are afraid of the impact of their opinions is no longer accepted. The current perception is that there is a genetic susceptibility to stammering, and that it is not that anxious children stammer, but that once they have been pilloried for stammering they become anxious, which makes the condition worse. Stammering bears no relationship to intellectual ability or the age at which a child learnt to speak.

Lena Rustin, the centre's consultant speech and language therapist and a pioneer in this therapy, says it is essential to treat each child as an individual. Parents, who usually have the greatest influence, are involved in every stage. The therapy is thus not imposed from outside the family circle, but generated within it.

Both the stammerer and family are assessed in detail, which takes at least three hours. This reveals any family history of speech disorder, tensions within the family that the child's problem may have induced or vice versa, and tensions that are being eased by the stammer. They quote one case in which a marriage was held together by a mutual interest in the child's stammer. The child responded to speech therapy, the stammer disappeared and the marriage dissolved, at which point the stammer reappeared.

Michael Palin: his father stuttered

Whereas most parents are protective, some teachers withdraw from the child or become angry. This increases the child's anxiety and stammer. One ten-year old boy was given an intensive course of therapy, at the end of which he was speaking as fluently as the rest of the class. His confidence grew and he made a cheeky remark, which had previously been beyond his ability.

The teacher made humiliating comments about his newfound fluency and the stammer reappeared. He returned for treatment. All went well for three months, when the pattern was repeated. The parents took a firm line with the school and all was well.

Treatment should start early, preferably before schooling starts, so that the child is fluent by the time classes begin. Lena Rustin emphasises the importance of specialised assessment. Children begin to stutter at any time but usually between the ages of two and five, when "physiological stuttering" affects many: Most outgrow it, but the decision as to who will and won't stammer is one for an expert. When talking to a stammerer, concentrate on what, not how, they are speaking. Don't guess what they want to say and say it for them. Don't look away, and do slow down your rate of talking so that the child doesn't have to keep up with you. Reduce the questions and don't interrupt. Allow a stammerer a fair share of conversation. Such children should have some uninterrupted parental attention.

● *The Michael Palin Centre for Stammering Children (0171-530 4238)*

Washing up and allergies



Cleaning up: never skimp on washing-up and always cook allergens, such as shellfish and peanuts, separately

THE United Kingdom, like America, has a Surgeon General at the Ministry of Defence. Air Marshal John Baird is Surgeon General but the decision to extend his tenure by a year might well have been defeated by an inadequately washed cooking pot on a train in Germany.

As usual Air Marshal Baird chose his dinner with care and asked for a beef goulash. Beef seemed pretty safe. He wasn't worried about BSE, his concern was that he was allergic to all shellfish and that the allergy, which appeared 30 years earlier while he was in Sarawak, Malaysia, was now so severe that a mouthful of lobster could be fatal.

Air Marshal Baird was met by his driver and his wife, Mary, but they had not driven far when his face started to swell, he couldn't breathe and collapsed unconscious. The driver found a lay-by where the Air Marshal's wife, a former theatre nurse, applied external cardiac massage. A paramedic team was soon on the scene, adrenaline was administered, shocks delivered to restore the heartbeat, and an intravenous line inserted into a vein. The Air Marshal survived. Fortunately, we can be certain that his intellect won't have been damaged and he will carry out his duties as successfully as before. We know this because as he started to come round in the German hospital, he tested his cognitive powers by running through the long Latin names for all the birds he watches on the Norfolk coast.

Why did he collapse? A week before, the pot in which the beef had been cooked had been used to prepare a prawn stir-fry. The lesson of the Air Marshal's perilous experience is twofold.

Those who are in danger of severe allergy should always carry adrenaline — he now has a loaded syringe in his inner pocket. The second lesson is to never skimp on washing up and to always use separate pots when cooking potent allergens such as shellfish and peanuts.

An end to itching

A RECENT survey by the National Eczema Society suggests that the most trying aspect of the condition is the itch. And the more that sufferers itch, the more they scratch. Antihistamines taken by mouth are useful in treating the itch but many cause sedation (those that don't also fail to ease the irritation), while those in cream form are ineffective.

Xepin (doxepin hydrochloride), a tricyclic antidepressant in cream form, is very effective in breaking the vicious itch-scratch cycle. In several patients the itch did not return after the treatment was stopped. Xepin — an H1 antagonist and also an H2 blocker — interferes with the action of acetylcholine, a neurotransmitter involved in the production of the itch. Xepin may be absorbed into the circulation in tiny quantities and so, as with antihistamines, some 15 per cent of patients may become slightly drowsy.

Very occasionally Xepin causes skin inflammation, but this is usually mild and soon clears up. Xepin is available only on prescription for those over 12.

Go for a baby on April 8

THOSE who run Classic FM are better musicologists than they are gynaecologists. They arranged a programme of soft, romantic but, of course, cultured music to encourage their listeners to procreate, so that the world's population of Classic FM listeners might be supplemented by a bumper birth rate on the first day of the millennium. There was also the altruistic motive of helping mothers to produce a child who would always have an historic birth date.

The musicologists have chosen two different days for special arrangements of romantic pieces. Initially, Saturday March 20 was the designated date but now it is Sunday April 11.

A quick check with *Down's Surgical Gestation Calculator* makes nonsense of the first date and suggests that the second will be a little late, but precision is impossible.

An expected date of delivery is worked out from the first day of a woman's last period and not from the date that conception is likely to have occurred. If, say, a woman is to have her baby on January 1, the first day of her last period should be on March 25 or 26 — this would certainly exclude March 20 as the day for the music.



A baby in 2000 needs timing

Ovulation occurs about a fortnight after the first day of the last period, and this is the time for the romantic music. My calculator tells me that the orchestral accompaniment should be billed for April 8 or 9. April 11 might be too late.

Assessing the brain

DR TONMOY SHARMA, a consultant psychiatrist and the director of cognitive psychopharmacology at the Maudsley Hospital, recently showed journalists scans of the brain at work. In many brain diseases a scan of the brain's component parts in action differs from one taken of someone lacking the symptoms of mental disease.

Up to now much of psychiatry has been subjective. But now technology can demonstrate that many peculiarities have their origin in aberrant function and not in a faulty upbringing. FMRI — functional magnetic resonance imaging — scans can define the nature of some diseases afflicting the most crucial of all human organs, and the influence that any treatment may have.

The advantage of FMRI scanning is that unlike positron emission tomography (PET) scanning, there is no radioactivity involved; colourful pictures of the brain working out a mathematical problem can be obtained without any danger to the patient. Serial scans can also be obtained so that the course of a disease, with or without treatment, can be mapped. Each scan will give an indication of how a particular part of the brain was working at a particular time.

This advance in neuropsychiatry is timely as it coincides with the introduction of kinder medication in the treatment of schizophrenia and a host of other diseases, including some aspects of Alzheimer's disease. These atypical antipsychotics do not merely treat the symptoms but alter the way in which the brain works and may prevent the disease from progressing.

Dr Sharma studies cognitive impairment in both schizophrenia and Alzheimer's. Cognitive ability comprises knowing, thinking, learning, judging, forward planning, speech and the ability to recognise and process a complex task in the time available. IQ tests should assess these abilities. Each attack of schizophrenia deprives a patient of six points in his or her IQ score but, just as with Alzheimer's, if the patient starts with a sound cortical reserve (they are pretty bright), the loss may not show initially but does show as the disease progresses.

Dr Sharma, using his FMRI scanner, has demonstrated similarities and differences in the loss of cognitive function in both diseases — even different parts of the brain are affected. We know that the early treatment of schizophrenic symptoms may prevent their advance, and it seems likely that this will apply to Alzheimer's.

Dr Chris Manning, one of the founders of PriMHE (Primary Care Mental Health Education), which provides education in psychiatry for healthcare workers, says: "Dr Sharma's meeting is, perhaps, the most exciting I have attended. The knowledge that mental illness results from definable disease and not from a failure of personality should remove much of its stigma."

● *Dr Tonmoy Sharma, Institute of Psychiatry: 0171-919 3977.*

Salmond spends a costly penny

The Scots are being asked to stump up for nationalism

Just as hostilities are declared in Brussels, Downing Street has had to open a second front in Scotland. The big battalions have been sent across the border, and reinforcements summoned to contain an unexpected flanking attack. Unless it can be cut off rapidly, it might just break through the forward echelons and hit the main division of Labour's standing army, painfully, in the rear.

With 50 days to go to the first Scottish elections, the awful whiff of defeat hangs like cordite in the air. How else to explain the Chancellor's hurried journey north, his greatcoat slung across his shoulders, Napoleon-style? The grim press conference, the terse response to media questions; the wheeling out of business leaders to predict the dangers ahead; the Prime Minister himself announcing, in Churchillian tones: "I urge the Scottish people not to put their future at risk."

All this because the Scottish National Party has announced that it intends to raise, not lower, taxes. At its conference in Aberdeen last week, it said that, if elected, it would forgo Gordon Brown's 1p reduction in basic income tax, and use the revenue to invest in public services. The SNP calculates that this will be a relatively painless process for the average taxpayer, and will provide an extra £700 million during the first term of a Scottish parliament for education, health or housing. It plays on the belief that the Scots, unlike the English, are willing to pay more in tax in return for higher state investment.

This is a massive gamble. It cuts right across the tactics adopted hitherto by Alex Salmond, the SNP leader, which have been aimed at wooing the business vote. His instinct had been to present the SNP as a modern social democratic party, keen to build an enterprise economy and to use the Scottish parliament to put Scotland at the forefront of technological development. There was much talk of another "Celtic tiger" after the Irish model. Enterprise, compassion, democracy was the fine slogan it adopted, with enterprise coming first.

But the fine rhetoric was not proving a notable winner in those parts of Scotland where the SNP has to pick up votes if it is to stand any chance of overhauling Labour — the former industrial areas of Glasgow, the West of Scotland and the Central Belt. This was reckoned to be classic "old Labour" territory, ripe for SNP inroads. An analysis of the party's prospects, however, using the additional member system, which will determine the number of second-vote seats to be won, showed that although the Nationalists stood second in a number of key constituencies, they were losing ground and would not pick up enough support to beat their principal rivals.

Then, listening to the Budget last week, John Swinney, the SNP's Treasury spokesman, thought he detected a Labour own-goal. By announcing his tax reduction, Mr Brown offered the SNP what seemed a golden opportunity of raising a tax which would leave no Scot worse off — simply not as well off as their English counterparts.

For most of the party faithful in Aberdeen last week, it sounded like a godsend. A buoyant Mr Salmond announced a whole range of public projects — free tuition fees, scrapping the tolls on the Skye Bridge, linking every school to the Internet, more books for schools and libraries, almost as if he had won the National Lottery. He also raised the biggest cheer of the day by promising to scrap Trident in a nuclear-free Scotland.

Suddenly we were back in a land which we had all but forgotten: pre-Thatcher land, where governments did what governments were meant to do: raising taxes and spending them on the people; nostalgia reigned. True, there were some dissenters to be corralled, and one or two speeches from the platform showed more than a hint of discomfort at this sudden lurch backwards. That old Nationalist troublemaker, Jim Sillars, described it as a classic miscalculation. But no one doubted that the move had defined the Scottish elections and the position of the two leading parties in a way that nothing before had done. There was much talk of "clear tartan water".

Labour's response was immediate. It calculated the cost to the average taxpayer as £5 a week. Mr Brown came north and summoned business leaders to say that jobs would be lost and firms would have to move south. He predicted chaos as separate systems were drawn up north and south of the border. In doing so, of course, he too was taking a calculated risk.

Magnus Linklater

The names wheeled out in Labour's defence bore a surprising resemblance to those the Tories summoned to warn voters about Labour's devolution plans. It handed the SNP an extra weapon: here, it was able to say, was a campaign run from London, using Tory allies to fight a Tory-style offensive.

In the end, however, I believe the SNP has got it wrong. Its approach assumes that the Scots are an unreconstructed people who will respond, Pavlovian style, to the lure of higher public spending; that they have learnt nothing from the recent history of Western economies; that they will vote instinctively for a tax-raising party without inquiring further into how efficiently that party intends to govern. The SNP may even have taken its own followers for granted. Its homeland territory of northeast Scotland was once held by the Tories. A disproportionately high number of voters in the area said "No" in the referendum on whether a Scottish parliament should have tax-raising powers.

The SNP, in short, may have committed one of those great strategic blunders that lose battles and cost lives: in storming forward it may have forgotten its lines of supply.

comment@the-times.co.uk



It could get even worse

The latest Euro-crisis may benefit those who got us into this mess

The Europhiles need not despair and Eurosceptics should certainly not celebrate. Perverse as it may seem, this week may mark a great leap forward for the "European Project".

The fiasco in Brussels suggests that the historic choice for Europe cannot be put off much longer. In choosing the new European Commission President — and doing so under the intense public scrutiny created by the Brussels crisis — the Governments of Europe will have to confront the momentous questions which they have been dodging, with diminishing success, for the past 40 years. Will the European Union reform itself and whittle down its functions to become a streamlined community of co-operative, but self-governing, countries? Or will the EU finally make a wholehearted and explicit commitment to the creation of a federated, democratic United States of Europe?

These questions must now be faced because the EU cannot go on as before. I say this not for reasons of morality but of practical politics. In the past, the horse-trading over a new President and Commission in Brussels has been a matter of no great interest or importance to anyone but the political classes in the chancelleries of Europe.

This time, however, the President's appointment will be laden with constitutional and symbolic importance. It will no longer do to appoint an obscure non-entity, a compromise candidate with no known opinions and no vision of Europe's future. He (or she) will have to present a programme, or at least a vision, for Europe that is understandable and impressive to the national electorates who will, for once, be watching the decisions made by their Governments in Brussels. The President's selection will be closer than ever before to a proper political campaign — and this will be followed immediately by the elections to the European Parliament in June. The upshot will be a period of intense political activity at the European level, in which the future direction of Europe will be exposed to unprecedented public attention and at least the appearance of democratic debate.

As this debate is joined, Europe will realise that it has reached a cross-roads. In one direction — the one clearly favoured not only by William Hague and the Conservatives, but by almost all strands of political opinion in Britain, including even the Liberal Democrats — Europe would have to step backwards. It would shift towards decentralisation and voluntary co-operation between independent governments. If this road were chosen, the new President would commit himself to hand back to national governments those responsibilities that are not directly connected with the maintenance of open markets and free trade.

This process would start with such relatively trivial matters as tourism and road-building, but would move gradually towards the renationalisation of income support for farmers and might call into question the greatest centralising project of all — economic and monetary union. For this very reason, the whittling down of functions demanded by Mr Hague and notionally supported even by Tony Blair, seems most unlikely to happen. This narrowing of focus might well be supported by many European voters, but despite the appearance of greater democracy in the forthcoming elections for the European President and Parliament, it will not be presented as a serious option by candidates, except perhaps by the Tories in Britain.

Anatole Kaletsky

And what if Europe takes the other road, rejecting the demands for a narrower focus, as is much more likely. There will then be another momentous choice. Again, Europe is unlikely just to go on as before. It will move towards greater centralisation — and it will probably do so much more rapidly than most politicians expected even a few months ago. By imposing more accountability and openness on the new President and his Commission, the Governments of Europe will be investing them with a new legitimacy. By that very fact, the European Commission and the other centralising institutions will be offered an irresistible invitation to extend their powers. But as the powers of the central institutions continue to grow, the demands for still greater democratic accountability, inspired by this week's debacle in Brussels, will intensify. The Strasbourg Parliament will aspire to fill this gap. And the more legitimacy the Commission and the European Parliament respectively acquire, the greater will be their appetite for still more powers.

The only way to stop this vicious circle is to confront head-on the question of what "Europe" is for and where it is going. Is the ultimate objective a fully fledged federal state or a free-trade zone? Or could it be, in my view most attractively, an association of independent countries, bound by a common political and legal framework, but co-operating in different fields to varying degrees and through different institutions? Whatever the answer, a proper examination of the issues and a full-scale constitutional reform is now required.

Significantly, the need for a new constitutional settlement for Europe, analogous to the Constitutional Convention that created the USA in 1789, is the one issue that unites almost all honest thinkers on Europe, ranging from Paddy Ashdown to Bill Cash. Unfortunately, it also unites almost all European Governments in the opposing camp. Governments on both sides of the federalist divide have tried to avoid these questions for contradictory motives. Instead of risking a direct confrontation with national cultures and historical traditions, European federalists proceeded from the start with circumspection, even stealth. The ill-fated Dutch attempt in 1991 to insert a reference to Europe's "federal destiny" into the first draft of the Treaty of Maastricht was the exception that proved the rule about the federalists' general circumspection. Instead of following the American example and building their United States from the constitutional foundations upwards, the founding fathers of Europe decided on the opposite approach — the "functionalist" theory of European integration discussed in this column last month. Europe would develop through the almost imperceptible accretion of non-controversial economic and administrative functions to the centre in Brussels. In the end, therefore, Europe would reach the same federal destination as the United States. But under the functionalist programme, no explicit approval from the perverse and unpredictable peoples of Europe would be required for this grand design.

Eurosceptic politicians, at least those of a moderate, internationalist persuasion, have been equally reluctant to face the federalist issue head-on. Especially when in government, leaders such as John Major and even François Mitterrand and Jacques Chirac, have worried about presenting the people of Europe with a stark choice between a glorified free-trade zone and a fully federated European state. Their main worry has been that either their own people or those of other European nations would give the "wrong" answer. If Germany, in particular, were offered the choice of a fully federal Europe, it might say "yes". In that case Britain, and even France, would face a choice that few Eurosceptics have dared to contemplate: to give up their national independence or to pull out of the mainstream of European integration.

The obvious answer for countries such as Britain and Sweden is to allow Germany and other nations that want to federate (or to operate a single currency) to do so, while remaining in an outer tier of European economic integration. But this is a choice that British Governments have gone to enormous lengths to avoid. It was in trying to dodge this option that both John Major and Margaret Thatcher destroyed their political careers. The question now is whether Tony Blair — with his quixotic claim that he can reform Europe without re-examining its constitution or its ultimate political destination — will eventually succumb to the same fate.

anatole.kaletsky@the-times.co.uk

Bragg boost

LORD BRAGG is poised to come out as the most celebrated Blairite to be wooed by the New Europe movement. Melvyn is said to be a "deep sympathiser" with Lord Owen's eclectic pro-Europe, anti-single currency campaign. He has long told friends of his scepticism but had been reluctant to offend his Europhile masters in the Lords.

Now the movement is hopeful that he will become "an upfront campaigner" — "our door is well and truly open for him". Ah, it takes me back to sweet sunny days when faintly confused celebs marched behind the good doctor to uncharted triumphs with the SDP.

THE Duchess of Marlborough has been practising DIY medicine. She recently mended a dislocated shoulder by swinging from a doorway in Blenheim Palace.

■ SAM MENDES has a new leading lady. After splitting with Jane Horrocks (left), the artistic director of the Donmar Warehouse is dating Calista Flockhart (right), the delightfully angst-ridden, air-munching damsel in *Ally McBeal*.

The duo met when Mendes took *Cabaret* to Broadway. His star has risen since, culminating in *The Blue Room*, in which he prevailed on Nicole Kidman to disrobe.




DAVID BECKHAM'S newborn son, Brooklyn, is to make an early debut. The Manchester United ballsmith has asked adidas to stitch his son's name into his boots, so he is reminded of his "greatest performance".

■ CARE in the Community: MPs are being sent on work experience. Eager pups such as Matthew Taylor and Austin Mitchell will spend ten days working for a charity. Most imaginative placement: Helen Brinton, harshly likened to an android, is to join MIND, the mental health charity. "I am particularly interested in personality disorders," she tells me.

NIL points for Brussels linguists. The Euro-babblers and sloppy English papers quoted Jacques Santer as insisting he was "whiter than white". He actually said: "I was completely cleared on this point" (a claim about his wife, not about his conduct).



■ DIFFICULT days for Wyttes, Tom Bantok's Soho club. With finance from Hamish McAlpine, Orlando Campbell as maitre d' and parties from Dai Llewellyn, it seemed convivial. But, two months on, doors remain shut.

"I didn't realise Tom had no licence or planning permission," says Dai. "I'm surprised it has come to this, as he had the right people behind him." The agreeable Campbell, meanwhile, is looking for work. Bantok insists the doors are sealed for "safety checks".

THE history of civilisation is the latest literary task entertaining Hywel Williams, having polished off the Tories with Guilty Men. *The Egyptians are trying. "I am very suspicious of people who like cats," he reasons. He promises to knock the book off soon: "I've done the Ancient Greeks, so I am on the home straight."*

YOUNG Etonians are being wooed by Alex Salmond to lead Scotland. He thinks aristocratic Scots, who have let his country down by scurrying south, should "come home". "The Anglo-Scottish aristocracy has often done Scotland down," the SNP leaders tells *Splinter*, an Eton literary magazine. "I would hope with independence they would turn their energies to making Scotland a success."

JASPER GERARD

'Serbia should stand and fall before Nato, rather than slink into a dog kennel for voluntary vivisection'

Srdja Trifkovic

Britain and America are poised to wage war on a European nation just because that nation has the temerity to believe in itself. Serbia is threatened with a massive bombing offensive simply because it acts as any proud nation would — it refuses to have foreign troops colonising its soil.

By intervening in Kosovo, the West is aiding and abetting secession by an ethnic minority within Serbia. That secession, once effected, will render many European borders tentative. In the context of any other European nation the story would sound surreal. The Serbs, however, have been demonised to the point where they must not presume to be treated like others. The West feels no inhibition in bullying a nation which is prepared to protect its integrity. But just because the West feels no inhibition, why should it escape having to give a rational justification?

"We must end the suffering!" we are told. But what about Rwanda, Burundi, Algeria and so many other unhappy lands?

The Western alliance regularly ignores horrific brutalities, and it has condoned aggression in eastern Turkey and East Timor. Taking action in Kosovo is not a stand in defence of universal principles. The West picks and chooses between the principle of self-determination and the principle of non-intervention as it suits. In Washington, Abdullah Ocalan is a terrorist, but the Kosovo Liberation Army are freedom-fighters. In each case, American interests decree who enjoys support, and who endures torture.

What is the West's specific interest in Kosovo? "Regional stability," we are told: if we don't contain this conflict now, it will engulf Macedonia, Greece, Turkey, and the entire Balkans.

But the West's proposed actions do not constitute a tourniquet which will stanch the flow of blood — instead, they are applying leeches to the haemorrhage. To force Serbia into signing a plan that will effectively elevate Kosovo to the status of a constituent republic, with Nato troops brought in to seal the deal, will produce countless new hotbeds of instability. Insurrection will have been seen to be rewarded.

Far from stabilising things, this scenario will unleash a chain-reaction throughout the former Communist half of Europe. Its first victim will be the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia, where the restive Albanian minority makes up a third of the population (as opposed to a fifth in Serbia). Oddly, the West does not object to the refusal of the Macedonian Government to grant autonomy to its Albanians. But once KLA veterans acting as policemen start to patrol Kosovo, the rising expectations of Macedonia's Albanians will be impossible to contain.

If the principle of full autonomy for minorities, leading to secession, is imposed on Serbia, will it not be demanded by the Hungarians in Romania who are more numerous than Kosovo's Albanians? What will stop the Russians in other republics from following suit?

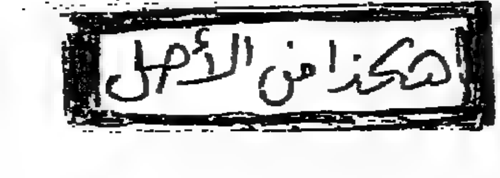
In the next week or so President Milosevic may give in to pressure: he manipulates these crises to preserve his power. With each new surrender he is temporarily converted by the West from the Beast of the Balkans into the Necessary Partner. Yet again, at home, he will paint defeat as victory, because he will get a figleaf in the form of a few Russian battalions or a few European millions. This outcome would be awful for Serbia. The nation should lose its tyrant, not its borders. It should stand and fall before Nato, rather than slink into a dog kennel for voluntary vivisection.

Another Milosevic surrender would also be bad because we need a good, loud argument within the Western alliance about American policy in the Balkans. It is not coherent diplomacy to allow Mr Milosevic to handle every crisis as a tool for domestic survival. And we need to appreciate that American support for intervention in Kosovo is influenced by selfish interests. An autonomous American military and political power-base in southeastern Europe would be an asset which would not depend on the future ups and downs of Washington's relations with Germany's Red-Green coalition and France's Eurocentrists.

"Most friendships, Sir" — as Dr Johnson reminded Boswell — "are mere leagues in vice, or conspiracies in folly." In politics they are invariably both. They also tend to end stickily for one or both parties. As Tony Blair prepares to follow Bill Clinton on yet another joyride, he would do well to remember the example of poor Che left out to dry by Fidel Castro. If he does not think again the real, literal victims will be thousands of young Serbs, Albanians, and Nato servicemen.

The author is Foreign Editor of Chronicles, *a magazine of American culture.*

comment@the-times.co.uk





WANTED, OFFICE CLEANER

What should be written on the EU's 'clean slate'

Jacques Santer's morning-after defiance has given way to what may appear to be a more contrite, and politically realistic, admission that the party really is over. The Commission now says that it has "neither the desire nor intention to remain in office longer than necessary" and will, while it stays, launch no new policy initiatives.

But this apparently humble bow to the inevitable requires translation. The denizens of this self-regarding world assume that the less this doomed Commission does, the keener governments will be to get a new one up and running — and the more likely they are to ignore the Maastricht treaty's legal ban on reappointing commissioners who have resigned, and to rehire nearly all of this discredited *equipe*.

If Tony Blair joins other governments in doing this, even as an interim measure, then he should have the grace to concede that in the backscratching world of EU politicking, there is no such thing as a clean slate. He will have colluded in making accountability a farce.

But one thing at least is clear: Mr Santer himself will be run out of town. Names are circulating, notably including the Nato Secretary-General, Javier Solana, and Romano Prodi, the wry economist who, against all expectations, pushed through just enough fiscal and budgetary reform to squeeze Italy into the single currency.

The odds are on Signor Prodi, not for the best reasons, but the worst. His credentials — an honest mien, more steel than his homely style suggests, and seriousness about cleaning up Italian politics — are less germane than the fact that it would suit the current Prime Minister, Massimo d'Alema, to see the back of him. In the European Parliament elections, Signor Prodi's new political movement, backed by the "clean hands" magistrate Antonio di Pietro, is expected to pick up enough of the vote to split the Italian left.

Small wonder then that Signor d'Alema is pushing his candidature hard, as a "now or never" opportunity. But although Signor Prodi's reforming zeal is undoubtedly good for Italy, he might be less ideal in Brussels than Mr Blair imagines. He is a convinced federalist. In the great question before the EU, whether Brussels will drive integration forward or allow more room for national identity, he would have a much less open mind than, for example, Giuliano Amato, another able Italian ex-Prime Minister esteemed for his personal probity.

It would be best, although it will not happen, if governments were to require all candidate to set out their strategies for reform. For the key question is not how to break with the shoddy Santer years, but how to dismantle the structures and outlook shaped by the formidable Jacques Delors. It was under M Delors, who boasted in the 1980s that within a decade, 80 per cent of all key policy decisions would be taken in Brussels, that the European Commission closed its tentacles over domains that it should never have usurped. Even without the scandals he let fester, Mr Santer was a disaster because he did not keep his promise to cut the Brussels coat to a more modest measure of cloth.

If the Commission is to win the respect of the public, it has not only to shed its arrogance and clean house. It must put a stop to the otiose intrusiveness that people rightly resent. That calls for a warrior-President, courageous and skilled enough to hobble if not slay the EU's most sacred cow — the doctrine of *acquis communautaire* which dictates that once Brussels has inserted its finger in a pot, it never removes it. The Commission needs to become more like the Europe that people live in, with all its national idiosyncracies, traditions and pride, than the homogenised "Europe" of the *énarques*. "*Je suis un top-downer,*" M Delors once revealingly said, in four words that sum up what is wrong. It will be hard, enormously hard, to put right.

WELCOME BAC

The fluctuating currency market in exams

The A level, the Gold Standard of secondary education, has survived to late middle age, despite signs that it has succumbed to creeping "grade inflation". Later this week the Government will reveal plans to shore up its value. But some schools are already turning their back on A levels, investing instead in the International Baccalaureate. Pluralism and choice, in exams as elsewhere, are healthy. Yet will these changes devalue the A level as a qualification?

The foundations of the A level have been mined from all sides. Left-wing critics claim that it is elitist. From the right comes the grave accusation that the relentless rise in the number of students with good A levels is not a sign that the nation has become brighter, but rather that the exams are easier. Employers complain that it furnishes too narrow an educational base.

The import of the International Baccalaureate may be evidence of how bad the situation has become. Yet its arrival is good news. The *Bac* addresses many of the A level's faults. It is broad: students select six subjects, spanning the arts and sciences. It offers depth: at least three of the six subjects are taken at a level equivalent to A levels. The marking system, which awards points, distinguishes students' ability more clearly than grades. It has been tried and tested in 100 countries; and schools such as Sevenoaks like its rigour.

Ministers prefer tinkering with the A level to its wholesale ejection. They are right. The A level still has strengths although it needs reform. Plans circulating in Whitehall would allow students to study up to five subjects in the first sixth-form year and take Advanced Supplementary exams in each of the subjects, some split into modules. At the end of the year, students would be able to drop one or two of the subjects, and concentrate on the remainder for the final A-level exam.

This solution aims to please everyone, promising greater breadth but defending the existing depth of study. Examining pupils at the end of their first sixth-form year will help universities decide which applicants should be offered places. Yet there are potential downsides. The stealthy advance of modules can fragment a subject's integrity. Being appraised on a bite-sized chunk of knowledge is less challenging than sitting an end-of-year exam. Although an AS level is taken in half the time of an A level, the first year of a course is less academically demanding than the second. The weighting of results for the two exams should reflect this.

Some teaching unions may oppose these plans for different reasons, alleging insufficient teachers, resources and hours in the day to teach five, not three subjects. They should see the merit in offering children greater breadth of study, even if that does mean a longer school day. Sixth-form students are at their desks for 18 hours a week, 12 hours fewer than their German or French counterparts. A more relevant concern is how these reforms will cater for brighter pupils. Creating an A-starred grade would simply turn the current A grade into a B. A better solution would be to introduce a more challenging exam which, unlike the S level, tests students' knowledge and understanding of the A-level syllabus to a greater depth.

Broadening the range without diluting standards is a difficult trick. A well devised AS level could correct many deficiencies of the current system. But if universities and employers see AS levels as undermining A levels, the Gold Standard will suffer the fate of any over-valued currency.

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER

Citizenship for Britain's last colonial subjects

It has been a long time dying, but Robin Cook's announcement that Britain's remaining colonial subjects will be granted full citizenship should at last lay the Empire to rest. Fifty-two years after India won independence, and two years after Hong Kong was handed over to China, the peoples of the 13 territories that chose to continue flying the Union Jack are finally to be treated as equals. Mr Cook is extending the right to live and work in Britain to 150,000 mostly non-white people living on islands which were once staging-posts on colonial shipping routes. Until now, these rights were enjoyed only by the Falkland Islands and Gibraltar, whose inhabitants are mostly white.

Other British islanders resented being fobbed off, in 1981, with a lesser post-imperial status that forced them to get visas to visit London and work permits to look for jobs here. The removal of citizenship was an unprincipled measure, taken largely to stop Hong Kong's 3.5 million mainly Chinese holders of British National Overseas Passports coming to Britain. The bitterness it caused came into the open after the volcanic eruption in Montserrat in 1997, when islanders accused Britain of giving them too little help to stay but, until policy was hurriedly changed, denying them the right to live in this country.

Reform has been delayed by old-style thinking on both sides. Some Caribbean territories have been slow to accept the responsibilities that go with full citizenship. In particular, they have dragged their heels over enacting tough new legislation, in line with Britain's, against money laundering — an issue Britain will review with them at the end of 1999.

The Home Office, for its part, was reluctant to make an exception to its immigration policies. Its point was not that granting citizenship to islanders would flood Britain with immigrants. Two thirds of the new citizens live on prosperous Caribbean islands and have little reason to move. What the Home Office demanded was reciprocity, the right for mainland British nationals to settle in the islands. Fearing their tiny economies would be swamped, the territories refused. Mr Cook persuaded the Home Office to back down.

Full citizenship will put the finishing touch to his broader plan to update London's relationship with colonies acquired as far back as the 1600s. The islands already have more access to Whitehall, and a minister and department in London to look after their interests. Mr Cook is to be commended for seeking a "modernised partnership"; and for a White Paper that elegantly rights a colonial wrong.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

'Blunt instrument' of motoring taxes

From Mr Martin Bennett

Sir, Although British fuel and vehicle excise taxes may be generally higher than on the Continent (letters, March 15), this does not translate into correspondingly higher total motoring costs, as anyone who has travelled on France's toll-charging autoroutes will know.

The principle behind the fuel duty escalator is to build into motoring costs a greater proportion of the external costs which are caused by motoring but incurred by society and the environment generally. The effect is intended to be to reduce the volume of petrol and diesel-fuelled road traffic to only what can genuinely be justified by the economic benefits which it creates, without hidden subsidy.

The problem is that our Government is attempting to achieve this only through the blunt proxy of vehicle and fuel taxes. As the road industry is now demonstrating, these can be easily avoided.

It has been estimated that if all external societal costs of motoring were factored into the fuel price alone, this would at least double its present level. The need is to design an alternative method of taxation which is less easily avoided. Taxation through road-use pricing, while still less than ideal, would be preferable to duties on fuel, and avoid loss of UK business and taxes.

Yours faithfully,
MARTIN BENNETT,
Environmental Management Accounting Group,
University of Wolverhampton,
Compton Road West,
Wolverhampton WV3 9DX.
martindbennett@compuserve.com
March 15.

From Mr Roger Sainsbury, FEng, President of The Institution of Civil Engineers

Sir, The Chancellor is understandably the subject of complaint by the road transport industry for having encouraged competition from other countries by his huge increase in the licence charges for lorries. But to focus on the charge alone is misguided.

This institution has for some years advocated the progressive increase of fuel duty for both cars and lorries. Albeit a blunt instrument, this will encourage the development of more efficient engines, evaluation of a switch to rail, and consideration of whether a journey is really necessary.

To increase the standing charge on a vehicle does not increase its marginal cost in use and is thus a poor incentive. On the contrary, the higher the standing charge the greater the propensity to drive the vehicle to gain value from that charge. It is the use of vehicles, not their existence, which threatens the environment. On these grounds, there has long been a good case for putting the whole amount of any environmental levy on to fuel prices and doing away with the licence fee.

The environmental benefit from dearer fuel will be lessened by the ability to buy more cheaply on the other side of the Channel. The Chancellor and Deputy Prime Minister should both press our European partners to demonstrate their green credentials in this matter.

Yours faithfully,
ROGER SAINSBURY,
President,
The Institution of Civil Engineers,
One Great George Street, SW1P 3AA.
March 17.

From the Chairman of the Forest Industry Council and others

Sir, We endorse the views of your correspondents today. Road fuel is an inescapable and essential prime cost of timber production and, despite our pleas, the Chancellor seems bent on destroying our industry.

In rural industry, road transport is an absolute necessity. In some European countries the cost of fuel is half that in the UK. A recent external industry review stated that the cost base of UK forestry had to be cut to be competitive. How can we compete in the face of this ever-increasing tax burden?

Additionally, the increase in vehicle excise duty on five-axle vehicles is so severe that many small rural hauliers will be unable to continue business.

Yours faithfully,
ANDREW CHRISTIE-MILLER,
Chairman, Forest Industry Council,
ROGER HAY,
Chairman,
Forestry Contracting Association,
RICHARD SOCHACKI,
Chairman,
Association of Professional Foresters,
LEN YULL,
Chairman, Timber Growers Association,
c/o Association of Professional Foresters,
7-9 West Street, Belford,
Northumberland NE70 7QA.
March 15.

From Canon Roy Arnold

Sir, Is the Europe which is attracting road hauliers and other business leaders to "re-flag" because of cheaper taxation over there the same Europe which they do not wish us to join because of EU social legislation and higher taxes?

Yours etc,
ROY ARNOLD,
49 Crossfield Road, Bollington,
Macclesfield, Cheshire SK10 5EA.
March 15.

Hit or miss ways to repel sharks

From Rear-Admiral Sir Richard Trowbridge

Sir, I write with reference to Jack Palmer's letter (March 10; see also letters, March 13) concerning the action to be taken against attacking sharks.

We grandfathers must hold together against the incredulity of the young and I hasten to support his claim concerning the differing defensive methods to be taken against various types of sharks. I well recall that such a notice was displayed in HM ships in the Far East in the early 1950s and that it caused much amusement and disbelief.

However, I must confess that after more than 40 years in the Royal Navy, I never met nor did I ever hear of anyone actually punching a shark on the nose, but perhaps this is because that was the wrong action to take against that particular fish and the person concerned never lived to tell the tale.

Yours truly,
RICHARD TROWBRIDGE,
Old Idsworth Garden,
Finchdean, Waterlooville,
Hampshire PO8 0BA.
March 16.

From Mr Michael Jefferson

Sir, In 1951, while serving in the Royal Navy in the Fleet Air Arm, I was sent to the United States to train with the US Navy, where I was provided with a package prominently labelled "shark repellent", attached to my Mae West.

I have a very strong suspicion that this contrivance was — like the punch-a-shark advice — a psychological anodyne to comfort those who had the misfortune to find themselves in shark-infested waters. My suspicions were confirmed when a member of my training squadron ditched in the Gulf of Mexico, and thought it prudent to scatter his packaged repellent about his dinghy, only to be immediately joined by a variety of sharks.

Fortunately, his sound good sense, diffidence and desire to survive prevented him from punching any of them.

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL JEFFERSON,
21 Hollow Lane, Hayling Island,
Hampshire PO11 9AA.
March 11.

From Mr Piotr Ney

Sir, While I cannot claim to be an admiral, I would be happy to corroborate Jack Palmer's letter about punching sharks on the nose. I have often performed this trick, in the course of scuba diving among various types of sharks, and hand-feeding sharks for the benefit of scuba-diving tourists.

Scuba divers are generally much safer from shark attack than surface swimmers. Sharks usually circle their potential prey, and one can tell fairly easily whether a nearby shark is contemplating an attack. They also have a distinct body language that betrays their mood, usually giving enough warning to allow one to leave the area unmolested.

Some subspecies, such as the tiger shark, can be territorial, and will make several warning displays before attacking. Swimming on the surface, of course, one is usually ignorant of such underwater warnings, while the erratic splashing noises signify prey to many sharks.

If a punch to the nose is needed, it is important to use the correct technique — the arm bent at right angles and raised horizontally, the back of the fist pointing away. A swift backfist punch minimises the chance of your fist following through off the nose into the open jaws.

Kind regards,
PIOTR NEY,
38e Montpellier Spa Road,
Cheltenham,
Gloucestershire GL50 1UL.
March 15.

From Mr John Cheyne

Sir, As a child, I hardly dared look at a particular sequence of photographs in *The Silent World* by Jacques Cousteau.

The sequence shows a grey shark turn and approach the camera. In the final picture, the shark is still coming and its head almost fills the frame. The caption reads: "The shark is 2ft away. Then I bang his nose with the camera."

Yours faithfully,
JOHN CHEYNE,
Walnut Farm,
East Dundry, Bristol BS41 8NH.
March 12.

From Alan Brown

Sir, I have been reading *Underwater Adventure* by Willard Price, in which Hal and Roger Hunt punched a blue and white mako shark on the nose to stop it attacking them.

It swam away but came back again very angry, so it is a good thing Mr Palmer didn't have to try this himself.

Yours faithfully,
ALAN BROWN (aged 9),
45 Wellesley Road,
Clacton-on-Sea, Essex CO15 3PN.
March 10.

Full-time motherhood

From Ms Fiona Clarke

Sir, Your article, "Want a baby? Read this first" (March 12), had me shouting at the newspaper (something I usually reserve for the radio).

If one lives in a flat in town and buys an Old English sheepdog, it is pretty clear that one is ignorant of the size and nature of the responsibility. Does that mean owning a dog is universally problematical?

When I had my children, I knew all about the noise, the dirty nappies, the sleepless nights, the avalanche of accessories. I was a career woman with a fulfilling life and I fully intended to return to work as soon as possible. What I was unprepared for was how much I loved being a mother and enjoyed the company of babies.

Eight years later, I am still a full-time mother, with three children. My husband, who married me on the basis that we weren't going to have children, jokes about wanting his money back.

Being a full-time mother is not valued by society — at parties, owning up to it is the quickest way to lose people. If you have chosen to devote your time to raising the next generation they assume you are too stupid or indolent to do anything else.

I think this comes as a shock, in particular to women young enough not to have established themselves in a career. I am still, after eight years, driven to talking about what I used to do as a way of getting people to take me seriously.

Despite having done a number of different jobs, motherhood is, for me, the most challenging, enjoyable, and undervalued occupation in the world.

Don't knock it.

Yours faithfully,
FIONA CLARKE,
11 Fairfield Road,
Uxbridge, Middlesex UB8 1AX.
March 13.

Spontaneous rhetoric

From Mr Johan Schloemann

Sir, Simon Jenkins (article, March 12) rightly insists that the art of speech-making is more than reading out a text, and that nowadays few are capable of speaking extemporaneously.

The same claim was made in the 4th century BC by the rhetorician and sophist Alcidamas, who deplored the (newly introduced) written preparation of speeches and pointed out that an off-the-cuff speech can much better react to the audience and the needs of the moment.

This tension between preparation and improvisation (on the early history of which I am preparing a dissertation) has been present in the art of rhetoric ever since.

Yours sincerely,
JOHAN SCHLOEMANN,
Potsdamer Strasse 168, 10783 Berlin.
johan.schloemann@student.hu-berlin.de
March 13.

Once and for all

From District Judge Helen Wood

Sir, I note from your report of the visit of the Prince of Wales to Sea Lion Island (March 16) that the two human inhabitants, a man and his wife, emigrated there from North Yorkshire 25 years ago. Even so, can there ever be such a thing as a "former Yorkshireman", as the caption to your photograph (earlier editions) put it?

Yours faithfully,
HELEN WOOD,
Pontefract County Court,
Pontefract WF8 1RJ.
March 17.

Volunteer help

From the Director General of the British Red Cross

Sir, Libby Purves is right to raise the issue of the impact on our society from a decline in volunteers (article, "St John seeks a face-lift", Weekend, March 13).

It is hard to imagine what would happen if agencies like the British Red Cross stopped providing services such as taking people home from hospital, lending medical equipment or supporting victims of fire, floods and other disasters.

This is "the dirty work", as Libby Purves calls it, which currently occupies the attentions of 86,000 British Red Cross volunteers who offer care to people in crisis.

It is at times of crisis when the volunteers of the British Red Cross and St John Ambulance are most needed. The two organisations worked very closely together, for instance, providing support to the victims of the Omagh bombing.

Volunteers are often the unsung heroes of society. Maybe we should all take time out to say thank you next time we see volunteers in action, and consider joining their ranks.

Yours faithfully,
SAM YOUNGER,
Director General,
British Red Cross,
9 Grosvenor Crescent, SW1X 7EJ.
March 15.

Letters to the Editor for publication should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — 0171-782 5046 — or by e-mail to: *letters@the-times.co.uk*

Limits imposed on medical training

From Lord McColl

Sir, The Privy Council is currently considering the representation from the Education Committee of the General Medical Council to withdraw recognition of the United Examining Board. The GMC has concluded that the standard required of medical students taking the board's examination is "not sufficient". But the committee has ignored requests from the board to specify the deficiencies and how they could be corrected.

In all the arguments I have seen about this matter, it has not been brought to the public's attention that there are advantages in having the board, as well as the universities, that can dispense medical qualifications. Some universities are at times inflexible, in which case the board can provide the answer.

Perhaps this could best be illustrated by the case some 12 years ago of a medical student at Guy's who broke his neck during a game of rugger and was paralysed in both legs and partly in his arms. His university refused to allow him to qualify with a degree but the board did allow him to take the examination, which he passed. He has been a triumph in the disability world, providing valuable leadership.

Another important reason for the continued recognition of the board is that it provides the only route for refugee doctors coming to the United Kingdom to qualify and obtain full registration; otherwise they would have to go through the entire medical school training.

The United Examining Board is run by highly reputable doctors and provides an important service to this country. I think that the General Medical Council Education Committee's representation is wrong, and I very much hope that the Privy Council will turn it down.

Yours faithfully,
IAN McCOLL
(Professor of Surgery, Guy's, 1971-98),
House of Lords.
March 17.

Library closure

From Professor Lauro Martines

Sir, The Reading Rooms of the British Library are now in their second week of closure, owing to industrial action, and there is no solution in sight (letter, March 16). Library management seem unable to find the £50,000 to content the 120 library assistants (5 per cent of staff) who actually fetch books for readers.

Could the trouble be that almost all the funds available for services and salaries now go to the red-jacketed warders, into "security" equipment and to other new services for non-readers, as well as to make good the heavy costs already disbursed to outside "consultants"? The interests of readers seem to be coming second to the need to serve and keep an eye on the non-readers who pour into the new building every day.

In their current handout management proudly boast that it "is the world's leading national research library". If so, when are they going to understand that their sole reason for existence as managers is, ultimately, in the activities of reading and research?

Yours faithfully,
LAURO MARTINES,
8 Gloucester Crescent, NW1 7DS.
March 16.

Worldly wisdom

From Mr David J. Cowan

Sir, Congratulations on your choice of text for the day after the Budget (March 10): "We didn't bring anything into this world and we won't take anything with us when we leave" (1 Timothy, vi, 7). This serves to put all material matters in their proper place and in the context of eternity.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID J. COWAN,
Cowan & Wood (solicitors),
114 South Street,
Dorking, Surrey RH4 2EZ.
March 15.

Prayer and shopping

From Mr Edward C. Wilson

Sir, If my wife's comments on my shopping are anything to go by, the prayer (letter, March 15) should also include: "You have left unbought those things which you ought to have bought."

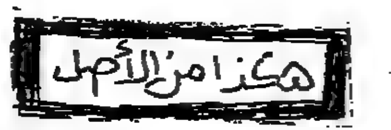
Yours faithfully,
EDWARD C. WILSON,
19 Castle Meadow,
Sible Hedingham, Essex CO9 3PZ.
March 15.

Wedding gifts

From Monsignor Graham P. M. Adams

Sir, When I am invited as a guest to a wedding, I send every couple the same gift (feature, "Every wedding list tells a story", March 16). They receive bathroom scales with the message, "May your way in life be happy and blessed."

Yours sincerely,
GRAHAM P. M. ADAMS,
The Presbytery,
Aston-le-Walls, Daventry NN11 6UF.
March 16.





COURT CIRCULAR

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
March 17: The Lord Somerleyton was received by The Queen when Her Majesty invested him with the Insignia of a Knight Grand Cross of the Royal Victorian Order.

Major General the Lord Michael Fitzalan Howard was received by The Queen and delivered up the Stick of Office upon his relinquishing his appointment as Gold Stick.

The Right Hon Tony Blair, MP (Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury) had an Audience of The Queen this evening.

The Queen attended a Reception for the College of Chaplains at St James's Palace this evening.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
March 17: The Duke of Edinburgh, President Emeritus, World Wide Fund for Nature - WWF International, this morning attended the Central African Forests' Summit, Yaoundé, Cameroon.

His Royal Highness this evening hosted a Dinner for Heads of State attending the Summit at the Presidential Guest House, Yaoundé, Cameroon.

ST JAMES'S PALACE
March 17: The Prince of Wales, Duke of Cornwall, this morning presided at a meeting of The Prince's Council.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
March 15: The Duke of York visited flood-damaged areas in North and East Yorkshire today.

March 17: The Duke of York, Patron, presented the Awards at the Annual Award Ceremony of the Royal Aero Club, at the Royal Automobile Club, London SW1.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
March 17: The Prince Edward this morning presented Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother's gift of Shamrock to the 1st Battalion Irish Guards in Oxford Barracks, Munster, Germany.

Lieutenant Colonel Sean O'Dwyer was in attendance.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
March 17: The Princess Royal today carried out the following engagements in Wellington, New Zealand:

Her Royal Highness, President, this morning visited Missions to Seamen at Centreport House, Hinemoa Street.

The Princess Royal later visited the Chartered Institute of Transport of New Zealand, TranzRail Corporate Office, Wellington Railway Station.

Her Royal Highness attended a luncheon given by The Right Honourable Jenny Shipley, Prime Minister of New Zealand, at Parliament Buildings.

The Princess Royal, Patron, New Zealand Riding for the Disabled Association Incorporated, this afternoon visited Hutt Valley Riding for the Disabled, County Lane, Silverstream.

Her Royal Highness later visited the Malaghan Institute of Medical Research at the Wellington Hospital.

The Princess Royal this evening attended a dinner hosted by His Excellency Sir Michael Hardie Boys, Governor General of New Zealand, at Government House.

KENSINGTON PALACE
March 17: The Duchess of Gloucester, Patron, St Peter's Trust - for Kidney, Bladder and Prostate Research, this morning received Mr Andrew Crawshaw (Chairman) and Miss Vanessa Wood (Director).

The Duchess of Gloucester, President, Research into Ageing, this afternoon visited the offices, Bard House, 15-17 St Cross Street, London EC1.

The Duke of Gloucester this evening attended a Reception and an Exhibition of the renovation of the Tabernacle, Powis Square, London W11.

Today's royal engagements

The Prince of Wales, president, The Prince's Trust, will attend the film premiere of *Tea with Mussolini* at the Empire, Leicester Square, London, at 7.30.

The Duke of York will attend a seminar given at Buckingham Palace for the National Maritime Collection at 2.00.

The Duke of Kent, as vice chairman, British Overseas Trade Board, will visit Cammell Laird Shipyard, Campbeltown Road, Birkenhead, at 11.10; will open the Laird Foundation, at noon; and will visit Birkenhead Priory, Priory Street, at 12.55. Later, he will visit R.S. Clare & Co, Stanhope Street, Liverpool, at 2.10; and officially open the Bonner Building of Contract Chemicals, Penrhyn Road, Knowsley Business Park, Prescot, at 3.30.

Memorial meeting

Mr Louis Schaffer
A meeting in memory of Mr Louis Schaffer, barrister, of 10 King's Bench Walk, Temple, was held yesterday in the Parliament Chamber, Inner Temple. Mr Daniel Schaffer, son, Mr Ronald Thwaites, QC, Head of Chambers, Judge Kenneth Zucker, QC, Mr Arnold Rosen and Mr Malcolm Weisman were the speakers. Members of the family, members of chambers and many other friends and former colleagues were present.

Birthdays today

Mr Ron Atkinson, football manager, 60; Mr Patrick Barlow, actor, writer and director, 52; Lieutenant-General Sir Peter Beale, 65; Professor Alexander Boksenberg, FRS, astronomer, 63; Major Sir David Butter, former Lord-Lieutenant of Perth and Kinross, 79; Mr J.P. Dawson, trade unionist, 59; Miss Lois Dyer, international physiotherapy consultant, 74; Mr Pat Eddery, jockey, 47; Sir William Fraser, Chancellor, Glasgow University, 70; Sir Peter Harrop, former civil servant, 73; Mr Alex Higgins, snooker player, 50; Professor Celia Hoyles, mathematician, 53; Mr Patrick Kavanagh, former deputy commissioner, Metropolitan Police, 76; Professor Linda Partridge, FRS, evolutionary biologist, 49; Mr Courtney Pine, jazz saxophonist, 35; Professor Sir Gordon Robson, anaesthetist, 78; Mr Alan Sapper, former trade unionist, 68; Mr Barry Shaw, Chief Constable, Cleveland, 58; Mr Nicholas Snowman, general director, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, 55; Mr Ingemar Stenmark, skier, 43; Professor Eric Sunderland, former Vice-Chancellor, University of Wales, 69; Mr John Updike, writer, 67.

Middle Temple

The following have been elected Masters of the Bench of the Middle Temple:

Mr A.R.H. Newman, QC, Mr C.M. Treacy, QC, Mr G.F. Laurence, QC and the Hon P.C.H. Simon, QC.

School news

Cranleigh School
Scholarships Awarded for September 1999
Academic
LVI and LV
Jehan Adamali, Hillcrest School; Elizabeth Chadwick, Royal High School; Gillian Ferguson, Farlington School; Samantha Lambart, St Catherine's School; Victoria Lyle, Tormead School (LV); Garrett O'Reilly, Our Lady and St Patrick College; Sneha Shah, Hillcrest School; Becky Waller, St Catherine's School; Lucy Youtan, Farlington School.
IV
Tom Boardman, St Edmund's School, Hindhead; James Brookes, Cranleigh Prep School; James Clark, Pennthorpe School; *Edward Daggett, Cranleigh Prep School;* Gregory Dodwell, Ripley Court School; Daniel Fallon, Great Ballard School; William Hazmett, Pennthorpe School; Ashleigh Howes, Tormead School; Anna Lewis, Guildford High School; Sam Tippetts, Cranleigh Prep School; Tim Williams, Barfield School.
Music, Drama and Art Awards
LVI and LV
Holly Baxter, Music, Tormead School; Leonora Edwards, Music, Tormead School; Dominic Hammond, Drama, Cranleigh School; Victoria Lyle, Music, Tormead School (LV); Marcus O'Donovan, Drama, King Edward's School, Witley; Catherine Staples, Music, St Catherine's School.
IV
Alastair Callender, Music, Brambletye School; Ben Constandinos, Music, Westbourne House School; Max Faulkner, Music, Dorset House School; Grant Greenham, Music, Haslemere Prep School; Tom Platt, Art, Haslemere Prep School; Edward Prince, Music, Westbourne House School; William Rigby, Music, Westbourne House School; Leo Selleck, Music, Cranleigh Prep School.
Eric Abbott Awards
IV
Michael D'Arcy, St Edmund's School, Hindhead; Robert Jones, Amesbury; William Jones, Cranleigh Prep School; Jeremy Martin, Haslemere Prep School; Tom Petzold, Haslemere Prep School; Robin Williams, Cranleigh Prep School; Francesca Willi, Highfield School.

Guildford High School
Scholarships and Exhibitions 1999
Academic Scholarships: 7+: Genevieve Broxon, GHS; 11+: Jennifer Ayers, GHS; 6th Form: Katie Beal-Preston, GHS, Keara Brennan, St Teresa's School, Sarah Pennant, GHS, Pippa Toplas, GHS.
Music Scholarships: 11+ Music: Harriet Wheeler, GHS; 6th Form Major Music: Emily Baker, GHS, Laura Pearson, St John the Baptist School; 6th Form Music: Amy Harrison, GHS, Miriam Horrocks, GHS.
Exhibitions: 11+ Music: Lara Moffat, Danes Hill School; 6th Form Music: Elizabeth Franklin, GHS.
11+ Instrumental Awards: Chloe Mackay, GHS, Nadya Matthias, GHS, Holly Rubenstein, GHS.

Luncheons

Mid-Atlantic Club
Lord Richard, QC, was the guest of honour and speaker at a luncheon of the Mid-Atlantic Club held yesterday at Dartmouth House. Lord Ezra, Chairman of the Energy and Technical Services Group, presided.

Maple Leaf Club
Ms Ann MacMillan, European correspondent for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, was the guest of honour at a luncheon of the Maple Leaf Club held yesterday at Over-Seas House, St James's. Mrs Judith M. Steiner, chairman of the club, presided. Mr Robert Zeller also spoke.

Receptions

Royal Aero Club
The Duke of York, President of the Royal Aero Club, was received by Mr David Cole, chairman, and *presented the annual awards at a* reception held yesterday at the club. The Gold Medal was presented to Ms Jackie Young and the Britannia Trophy to Mr Brian Milton.

CSV
The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs was the host at a reception held last night at 1 Carlton Gardens for CSV (Community Service Volunteers) the UK's leading volunteer organisation. Among the guests were:
Lord Levy (CSV's Honorary President) and Lady Levy, Sir Brian Jenkins, Mr Andrew Rowe, MP, and the Hon William Plowden (Trustees), Mr Paul Boateng, Minister of State, Home Department, Baroness Pike, Lord and Lady Hamlyn, Sir Victor Blank, Mr Alan Rusbridger, Ms Lindsay Mackie and Ms Anne McGuire, MP.

ROY RILEY



Three surviving fragments from one of the most important 15th-century paintings have been brought together for the first time since it was mysteriously cut up many years ago. St Mary Magdalen reading, St Joseph, and St Catherine (not shown here), from *The Virgin and Child with Six Saints*, the most ambitious altarpiece by the influential Flemish painter Rogier van der Weyden, go on show at the National Gallery today in an exhibition marking the sixth centenary of the artist's birth

Dinners

Cutlers' Company
Mr Barry Jackson, President of the Royal College of Surgeons, was a speaker at the Cutlers' Company annual surgical award dinner held last night in Cutlers' Hall. During the evening Mr Peter Watts, Master, presented the Cutlers' Surgical Prize for 1998 to Mr D.A. Murphy for his invention of a second generation endoscopic needle holder. Mr R.D. Regan also spoke. <el.4

Among others present were:
The President of the Association of Surgeons of Great Britain and Ireland, the Officer Commanding 256 (London) Field Hospital RAMC (V), the Secretary of the Royal College of Surgeons of England, the Master of the Horners' Company, the Master Cutler in Hallamshire, Dr K Thorne and Mr Alderman R G Finch.

Dramatists' Club
Mr Patrick Garland, President of the Dramatists' Club, presided at the ninetieth anniversary dinner held last night at the Garrick Club. Sir Donald Sinden and Miss Rosemary Anne Sisson also spoke. Among those present were:
Lord Morris of Castle Morris, Lady Sinden, Miss Patricia Routledge, Miss Eileen Atkins, Miss Angela Rippon, Mr Alec McCowan, Mr Ned Sherrin and Mr Bill Shepherd.

Marylebone Cricket Club
The Treasurer of MCC, Mr Michael Melluish, was in the Chair at a Club Dinner held at Lord's last night. Mr Peter Baxter proposed the toast to "Cricket", and Mr Colin Ingleby-Mackenzie responded.

CIWEM
Professor Chris Baines, environmental advisor, writer and broadcaster, was the principal guest at the Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management's Annual Council Dinner held last night at the Café Royal, London. Dr Peter Matthews, president, was in the chair. Presentations were made to the winners of the Chris Binnie Award for Sustainable Water Management and the CIWEM and Diploma Award winners. Senior members of the water and environmental management profession were present.

Appointments

Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Mr Edward Clay to be High Commissioner to Cyprus from May in succession to Mr David Madden who is moving to a new Diplomatic Service appointment.

Mr Creon Butler to be Chief Economist and Head of the Economic Relations Department at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office from next month.

Mr Tom Harris to be Director General, Trade and Investment US, and Consul General, New York.

Northumberland

Mrs Lynn Camsell and Mrs Doreen Elwell to be Deputy Lieutenants of Northumberland.

Anniversaries

BIRTHS: Grover Cleveland, 22nd American President 1885-89 and 24th President 1893-97, Caldwell, New Jersey, 1837; Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, composer, Tikhvin, Russia, 1844; Rudolf Diesel, engineer, Paris, 1858; Neville Chamberlain, Prime Minister 1937-40, Birmingham, 1869; Wilfred Owen, poet, Oswestry, 1893; Robert Donat, actor, Manchester, 1905.

DEATHS: Edward the Martyr, King of England 975-78, murdered at Corfe Castle, Dorset, 978; Fra Angelico, painter, Rome, 1455; Philip Massinger, dramatist, London, 1640; Robert Walpole, 1st Earl of Orford, the "First Prime Minister" 1721-42, London, 1745; Laurence Sterne, writer, London, 1768; John Horne Tooke, politician and philologist, London, 1812; Marcelin Berthelot, chemist, Paris, 1907; *George I, King of Greece 1863-1913*, assassinated, Salonika, 1913; Eleutherios Venizelos, Greek Prime Minister 1910-15, 1917, 1924 and 1928-30, Paris, 1936; Farouk I, King of Egypt 1936-52, Rome, 1965; Erich Fromm, physiologist, Locarno, Switzerland, 1980.

The Tolpuddle Martyrs were sentenced to transportation for forming a trade union, 1834.

The Commune rising began in Paris, 1871.

The Soviet cosmonaut Alexei Leonov made the first walk in space from his craft Voskhod 2, 1965.

More than 30,000 tons of crude oil were disgorged when the *Torrey Canyon* was wrecked off Cornwall, 1967.

Forthcoming marriages

Mr J.A.S.S. Andrews and Dr A.L. Shakespeare
The engagement is announced between Joshua, son of Mr and Mrs Anthony Andrews, of Hampshire, and Abigail, daughter of Dr and Mrs John Shakespeare, of Lancashire.

Mr A.J. Brod and Miss S.E. Bramley
The engagement is announced between Alex, elder son of Mr Thomas Brod, of Hampstead, London, and of Mrs Linda Brod, of Cricklewood, London, and Susan, daughter of Mr and Mrs Barry Bramley, of Effingham, Surrey.

Mr A.G. Butterwick and Miss B.L. Gillingham
The engagement is announced between Guy, youngest son of Mr and Mrs Antony Butterwick, of Pinkneys Green, Berkshire, and Beth, daughter of Mr and Mrs Derek Gillingham, of Seer Green, Buckinghamshire.

Eur Ing T.W.H. Chance and Miss F.M.L. O'Sullivan
The engagement is announced between Timothy, elder son of Mr Hugh Chance, of Santa Cruz, California, and Mrs John Wheeler, of Bitterly, Shropshire, and Fiona, younger daughter of Mr and Mrs Owen O'Sullivan, of Dublin, Ireland.

Mr D.J.H. Charles and Miss V.C. Crawley
The engagement is announced between Daniel, only son of Mr and Mrs Michael Charles, of Netley Abbey, Hampshire, and Victoria, second daughter of Mrs Marilyn Crawley, of Newcastle upon Tyne.

Mr C.J.C. Crookshank and Miss L.P. Angliss
The engagement is announced between Charles, son of Mr John Crookshank, of Westbourne, Hampshire, and Mrs Denis O'Brien, of London, and St Louis, USA, and Lucy, daughter of Mr Simon Angliss, of Great Bookham, and Mrs Paul Richardson, of Clandon, Surrey.

Dr J. Cohen and Miss S.C.E. Telfer
The engagement is announced between Jeremy, son of Mr and Mrs Martin Cohen, of St Albans, Hertfordshire, and Sara, elder daughter of Mr and Mrs Ian Telfer, of Altea, Spain.

Mr A.W. Elder and Miss I.J. Trist
The engagement is announced between Alan, son of Mr and Mrs William Elder, of Troon, and Isabel, daughter of Mr and Mrs Richard Trist, of Portsmouth.

Mr G.O. Ford and Miss N.A. Bamford
The engagement is announced between Gareth, son of Mr and Mrs Owen Ford, of Oakley, Hampshire, and Nicola, younger daughter of Mr Michael Bamford, of Cape Town, South Africa, and Mrs Susan Bamford, of Cheltenham, Gloucestershire.

Flight Lieutenant D.A. Livingstone and Miss S.E. Hyde
The engagement is announced between Duncan, younger son of Dr and Mrs Maitland Livingstone, of Skene, Aberdeenshire, and Sarah, elder daughter of Mr and Mrs Leslie Hyde, of Ivinghoe, Buckinghamshire.

Mr N.G. Orfanides and Miss D.J. Stephens
The engagement is announced between Nicolas, only son of Mr and Mrs Georges N. Orfanides, of Madrid, and Dinah, daughter of Mr and Mrs B.F. Stephens, of Salisbury, Wiltshire. The marriage will take place in Spain.

Mr M. Paddock and Miss A.J. Hunter
The engagement is announced between Matthew, younger son of Mr and Mrs Brian Paddock, of Brixham, Devon, and Alexa, elder daughter of Mrs Rozanthe Hine-Haycock, of Kingswear, Devon, and of Mr Timothy Hunter.

Mr R.M. Talbot Garman and Miss M.F. Alonso Gallego
The engagement is announced between Rupert, eldest son of Mr and Mrs David E. Talbot Garman, of Llanfihangel Rhydithon, Radnorshire, Powys, and "Pepa", eldest daughter of Señor and Señora de Alonso Thous, of Torrelodones, Madrid.

Dr P.F. Worth and Miss C.G. Barker
The engagement is announced between Paul, son of the late Major Joseph Worth and of Mrs Worth, of Salisbury, Wiltshire, and Camilla, daughter of Mr and Mrs Timothy Barker, of Thorpe Morieux, Suffolk.

Church news

Retirements and resignations
The Rev Cyril Astill, Priest-in-Charge, Burton Agnes w Harpham and Lowthorpe w Ruston Parva (York) retired February 1.
The Rev David Bond, Rector, Northiam St Mary (Chichester) retired February 1.
The Rev Roy Cotton, Rector, Brede w Udimore (Chichester) retired February 1.
The Rev Brian Cranwell, Vicar, Handsworth Woodhouse St James (Sheffield) retired February 1.
The Rev Ben Elliott, Vicar, Mere w West Knoyle and Maiden Bradley *(Salisbury) retired January 31.*
The Rev Patrick Forbes, Press Officer, Mission to Seamen, retired January 16.
The Rev Philip Jones, Honorary Chaplain, Portsmouth Cathedral, and with permission to officiate (Portsmouth) retired February 23.
The Rev Avril Jordan, Curate, Ottery St Mary, Alfington, West Hill and Tipton St John w Venn Ottery (Exeter) retired February 1.
The Rev Thomas Kenny, Vicar, Stockton Heath (Chester) retired February 1.
The Very Rev Stuart Morris, Rector, Hadleigh, and Rural Dean of Hadleigh (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich) retired February 1.
The Rev Malcolm Roberts, Rector, Fiskerton w Reepham (Lincoln) retired February 1.
Canon Derek Ryder, Team Rector, Wexcombe (Salisbury) retired January 31.
The Rev Geoffrey Sansome, Vicar, Marbury (Chester) retired February 1.
The Right Rev Frank Sargeant, Bishop at Lambeth Palace (Head of Staff) (Canterbury) retired February 1.
The Rev Brian Shannon, Vicar, Great Wakering w Foulness (Chelmsford) to retire June 30.
Canon Trevor Shannon, Vicar, Gt Ilford St Clements and St Margaret *(Chelmsford) retired February* 1.
The Rev David Smith, Priest-in-Charge, Arlington, Folkington and Wilmington (Chichester) retired February 1.
Canon Guy Smith, Team Rector, Kidderminster West (Worcester) retired February 28.
The Rev Patrick Wooster, Vicar, Stone w Woodford and Hill (Gloucester) retired February 1.

Other appointments
Miss Rachel Barker, Cumbria Education Authority: to be Strategic Education Adviser (Bradford).
Mr Malcolm Halliday, Diocesan Secretary (Bradford): to be Lay Canon of Bradford Cathedral (same diocese).

BMDS: 0171 680 6880
PRIVATE: 0171 481 4000

PERSONAL COLUMN

TRADE; 0171 481 1982
FAX: 0171 481 9313

I will freely sacrifice unto thee: I will praise thy name, O LORD; for it is good. Psalm 54.6 (AV).

BIRTHS

CLARKE - Martin and Frances (née Layton) give thanks to God for the birth of their daughter Freya Hilary Sutton on 24th February, a sister for Eleanor and Verity.

COULSON - On Saturday February 27th 1999, to Claudia (née Cadbury) and Ivo, a daughter, Jasmine Natasha Cadbury.

DOVEY - On February 14th 1999 to Claire (née Peel) and Glenn, a son, Edward Oliver.

GIMLETTE - On March 16th 1999, to Henrietta (née Smyly) and Edward, a son, Alistair.

GOODMAN - On 13th March to Juliet (née Finnigan) and Julian, a daughter, Anna Charlotte, a sister for George.

GREENLEY - On 13th March, to Vicky (née Atkins) and Simon, a daughter, Ella Georgia Clementine, a sister for James.

HUGH SMITH - On March 12th at The Portland Hospital, to Kate (née Gray) and Peter, a daughter, a sister for Piers and Lily.

IRVANIPOUR - On January 9th at The Portland Hospital, to Soad Mohajerani and Shadi Irvanipour, a son, Sajjad Ali.

LIVINGSTONE - On March 15th at The Portland Hospital, to Frances (née Fletcher) and Ian, a son, Daniel Anthony, a brother for Jack.

MOONEY - On March 15th at The Portland Hospital, to Jaylene and Robert, a son, Daegan Robert.

OLOKE - On March 15th at The Portland Hospital, to Carol and Emmanuel, a daughter, Shona, a sister for Mizita.

PEARSON - On March 15th 1999 in New York City, to Barbara (nee Nicoll) and Stewart, a daughter, Eleanor.

PODMORE - On 15th March 1999 to Susannah (née Barnett) and Malcolm, a daughter, Emilia Marieliese, a sister for Freddie and Arabella.

REES - On March 12th, 1999 to Lucy (née Collins) and David, a son, Edward (Ned) Henry Everard, a brother for Benjamin.

ROSE - On March 11th at The Portland Hospital, to Farrah and Tony, a son, Anthony, a brother for Tanya.

ROSS - On March 2nd, to Paul and Joanna (née Tracey), a son, Christopher "Kit" Henry. Deo Gratias.

STREET - On February 27th, to Jane and Bill, a son, George William Leonard.

SULLIVAN - On March 12th, to Jan (née Bolt) and Mark, a son, John Andrew, a brother for Rebecca, Hannah and Sarah.

WHEELER - On Monday, March 15th, 1999, in Jersey, to Anne-Marie (née Stuart-King) and Andrew, a daughter, Georgia Claire Alix Stuart, a sister for Alexander.

DEATHS

ALLIN - Suddenly at home on 16th March 1999 Dr John Raymond Allin aged 61 years. Most dearly loved husband of Janet, loved and respected father of Richard, Elizabeth, Jim and Lydia, brother of Philip and devoted Grandfather to his little treasure Catherine. Private funeral for family and close friends. Donations if desired to Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund c/o David Holland and Son, London Road, Grantham. A service of thanksgiving will take place at St Vincents Church, Caythorpe, Nr Grantham on Wednesday 7th April at 11.30am.

AMYES - Anne peacefully on 15th March, aged 80, after a long illness. Widow of Julian, much loved mother of Sebastian and Isabelle and grandmother of Rupert and Alix. Family funeral, no flowers please but donations, if desired, to Imperial Cancer Research Fund, c/o Camp Hopson Funeral Directors, Newbury. (01635) 522210.

ANDERSON - Agnes Joan Anderson - March 13th 1999 very peacefully at Beechlands, Sussex. Wife of the late Alexander. Much loved by her family and by her many, many friends. A Service of Gratitude is to be held at St Peters Church, Hambledon, nr. Godalming, Surrey at 2.30pm on Friday, 26th March. No flowers please, but donations if desired to The Bursar, Claremont Fan Court School, Claremont Drive, Esher, Surrey, KT10 9LY.

ASHBRIDGE-THOMLINSON - Michael Frank. Died 25th January aged 68 years. Memorial Service at Dalston Parish Church, Dalston, Cumbria 20th March 11.00 am. Contact 01237 454360.

BELL-SYER - Squadron Leader H.B. (Michael), A.F.C., RAF (Ret'd) suddenly at home, aged 80, on March 12th 1999. Funeral service at 11.30am on Monday March 22nd at St Simon Zelotes, Milner Street, SW3. Family flowers only. Donations, if desired, to R.N.L.I., c/o JH Kenyon 0171 937 0757.

CHILTON - Elizabeth, suddenly on 13th March 1999, in Bognor Regis. Eldest daughter of the late Sir Maurice and Lady Chilton. Funeral at St Mary's Slindon on Tuesday 23rd March at 3.00pm. Enquiries to Reynolds Funeral Service, tel: 01243 864745.

COLES - Ernest Edgar peacefully at home after a mercifully short illness. Family flowers only please but if desired donations to Macmillan Cancer Relief Fund at King Edward VII Hospital, Midhurst would be greatly appreciated. Funeral at St Laurence, Lurgashall on Saturday March 27th at noon.

DAVIES - Joan, mother of Hugh and the late Alan, on March 13th 1999 aged 91. Funeral service at St Nicholas' Church, Ringwould on Friday March 26th at 11.30am. Donations if desired to The British Red Cross, 25 College Road, Maidstone, Kent.

DAVIS - Ralph Patrick. On 16th March 1999, peacefully at home, aged 79 years. Father of John and grandfather of Michael and Rosie. Funeral Service at St Peter & St Paul Church, Chaldon on Monday 22nd March at 2.30 pm. Flowers to Stoneman Funeral Service, Doran Court, Redhill, Surrey.

DREW - Paul Drew, MBE, on 13th March, peacefully at St Mary's House, Seaford, aged 90. Remembered with much affection by friends and family. Funeral 3.15pm, 23rd March, Woodvale Crematorium, Brighton. No flowers.

HARRIS - On Wednesday March 10th, with his family Cyril (Tony) aged 88 years after a short illness. Formerly Headmaster of schools in Leicestershire. A much loved father, grandfather and great-grandfather. Funeral Service at St Michael's Church, Aylsham, Norfolk on Monday March 22nd at 2.30 pm. Family flowers only please, but donations if desired for the National Trust may be sent to R.B. Copping & Partners, Funeral Service, Chapel Lane, Shotesham, Norwich NR15 1YP. Tel: 01508 550250.

JENNINGS - Alan of Cheddar, Somerset, on 16th March at Weston-super-Mare after a long stoically and bravely borne illness. Assistant County Treasurer at Avon County Council from it's inception until 1988. He leaves a son Christopher, grandchildren Nicholas, Simon, Clementine and Benjamin and a great-granddaughter Eleanor. A loving, generous man of great wit and personal courage and commitment to others within the community. Funeral at St Andrew's Church, Cheddar at 11 am on 23rd March. Flowers to George Williams Funeral Directors, Redcliffe Street, Cheddar.

LEE - Audrey (Bunty) aged 83. Beloved wife of John Hilary and mother of Ann and Tessa, on 13th March at Addenbrookes Hospital, Cambridge. Unexpectedly but peacefully. Private Cremation.

McCARTAN - On 16th March in Kendal, Edith (née Lord), widow of Dr William McCartan, died peacefully aged 97. Funeral private. Family flowers only. Donations to Mind, please.

MILFORD - Pearl (Pat) passed away 13th March aged 88. Widow of Harry Milford. Funeral 3 pm Wednesday 24th March East Chapel Breakspear Crematorium, Ruislip. Flowers to H.C. Grimstead Ltd., 164 Field End Road, Eastcote, Pinner or donations to the Alzheimer's Disease Society.

OSBREY - John, Barrister. Died at home 12th February. Funeral service on Friday 26th March at 1.30pm at Temple Church, Inner Temple, off Fleet Street, London EC4 followed by cremation at 3.30pm at Mortlake Crematorium and afterwards at Royal Mid-Surrey Golf Club, Richmond. Flowers or if preferred, donations to RSPCA, c/o R. Brain & Gamble, 601 Fulham Road, London SW6. Tel 0171 385 7625.

PICK - On 16th March 1999, peacefully at the Princess Royal Hospital, Beryl of Lindfield, West Sussex. Much loved wife of Charles. Mother of Martin and Sue and an adored grandmother of Namrita, Tara, Katharine and Oliver. Private cremation service. A service of thanksgiving will be held at All Saints' Church, Lindfield on Friday 26th March at 3.00pm. No flowers but donations to the N.S.P.C.C. may be sent c/o Masters and Son, Lewes Road, Lindfield, West Sussex RH16 2LE. (01444) 482107.

POWELL - On 14th March 1999, Aliette (née Robertson) wonderful wife, wonderful mother. Funeral Mass at St Josephs Roman Catholic Church, Midland Road, Bedford on Monday 22nd March at 10.45 am. Flowers to Arnolds Funeral Service, Roff Avenue, Bedford, tel: 01234 358529.

RIDE - Violet May, widow of Sir Lindsay Ride late Vice Chancellor of the University of Hong Kong, on 16th March 1999 at Christchurch. Loved and sadly missed by her many friends, and especially by Elizabeth Ride, Sister Margaret Mary SPB, David Ride, Anne and Heather MacRobert and James Jolly. Funeral Service at Christchurch Priory on 25th March at 2.30pm followed by private cremation. Flowers, or preferably gifts to Charity, to Harry Tomes Undertakers of Tower Road, Boscombe, Bournemouth, BH1 4LA.

ROBERTSON - David Lars Manwaring Robertson CVO aged 82 on 16th March 1999, much loved husband of Pamela and dearly loved father. Funeral Service St Mary's Church, Newick, Sussex at 12 noon on Thursday 25th March 1999. Family flowers only.

SPENCER - Patricia Iris Madeline (Bridget), peacefully on 12th March in her 81st year. Beloved wife of Arthur and dear mother of Michael, Elizabeth, Caroline and Janet and grandmother of Sheena, Nuala, James, Alice and Victoria. Funeral on Monday, 29th March, 2pm, St Mary's Church, Adderbury. No flowers. Donations to Messrs Humphris, 32 Albert Street, Banbury, Oxon OX16 8DG for the Beeson Ward, The Radcliffe Infirmary, Oxford. To aid the care of stroke victims.

STANGER - On March 15th following a bravely fought battle against cancer, Nigel of Jesmond, Newcastle upon Tyne, aged 56, Musician and Newcastle Arena Developer, died in the arms of his family. Funeral to be held at St Nicholas Church, South Gosforth, Newcastle at 10.45am on Monday 22nd March. Cremation at West Road Crematorium at 12 noon. Family flowers only please. Donations in lieu of flowers to Cancer Research Campaign, 19 Saville Row, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 8JE.

TALBOT - Peacefully on 16th March 1999 at Hatfield Peveral Lodge Nursing Home in her 92nd year, Margaret Roach Wilcox, widow of Geoffrey and much loved mother, grandmother and aunt. Enquiries and flowers to F.E. Farrer tel: (01277) 622944.

TAYLOR - John Osbrey, see Osbrey.

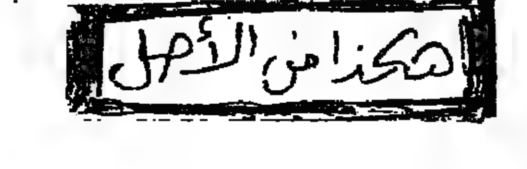
VIGURS - (Née Bosse) Wendy, aged 54, died 15th March after a short illness. There will be a service of thanksgiving at 10.30 am on Tuesday 23rd March at St Luke's Church, Ramsden Road, Battersea, London SW12. Floral tributes should be sent to J.E. Gillman and Sons, 971 Garratt Lane, Tooting, SW17 0LW.

YOUNGHUSBAND - John David on March 14th, peacefully, aged 86. Beloved husband of the late Joyce, loving father and grandfather. Private cremation followed by a Thanksgiving Service at St Thomas-a-Becket Church, Warblington, Havant on Tuesday 23rd March at 2.30pm. Family flowers only, donations to The Royal Medical Benevolent Fund, c/o Grady's F/D, 23 Mengham Road, Hayling Island, PO11 9BC.

To place death notices, acknowledgements or notices please call
0171 680 6880

MEMORIAL SERVICES

WIDDECOMBE - James Murray Widdecombe CB OBE. A Service of Thanksgiving for the life and work of Murray Widdecombe will be held on May 17th at 2 pm at St Philip's and St Jacob's Church, (Pip'n'Jay), Bristol. Enquiries to Ann Widdecombe MP.



OBITUARIES

PEREGRINE FELLOWES

Peregrine Fellowes, diplomat and Arabist, died on February 15 aged 86. He was born on July 8, 1912.

BORN into the now lost culture of Empire, Peregrine Fellowes grew up with the sense of duty of an Englishman abroad. One of his great uncles, Lord Sydenham, was Governor of Bombay, another, Sir Thomas Wrightson, Bt, supplied rail equipment to the whole of the Indian sub-continent, while his father's brother, Air Commodore Peregrine Fellowes, led the Houston Everest Flight of 1933.

His father had decided to try his hand at ranching, but when he and his pregnant wife arrived at their holding near Calgary in Canada they made the unwelcome discovery that their agent had absconded with the money intended for a new house. As a result, Peregrine was born in a stable, for which, as he would often observe, there was an excellent precedent.

After his father's death in the First World War, his mother's next marriage, in 1923, brought Catholicism in its wake. Although his conversion was denounced by his father's family, his education at Ampleforth (where his step-uncle Father Herbert Byrne would be Abbot) and his new faith proved a mainstay throughout his life.

Having graduated as a civil engineer from University College London, Fellowes was asked to supervise bridge construction in the Sudan. Believing the job to depend on the assumption that he was a bachelor, he concealed the existence of his wife for the first few months, until he discovered that her presence would merely secure him a larger bungalow. She quickly joined him, and merriment ensued in the prewar playgrounds of the Sudan, South Africa and Kenya.

When hostilities broke out in 1939, his knowledge of Africa led to his inclusion in a small group with a secret mission to regain the Ethiopian throne for Emperor Haile Selassie. Fellowes had some odd jobs. He was responsible for the Mobile Propaganda Unit, a printing press borne by two camels. This was used to print appeals to the Italians, which were pushed over the barbed wire on bayonets, and, according to legend, frequently resulted in surrender.

Various peculiar orders were received, of which Fellowes's own favourite was the instruction to accord the Emperor every formal mark of deference but only to address him as Mr Smith. The whole (successful) endeavour was chronicled by George Steer in his book, *Sealed and Delivered*, published in 1942.



Fellowes during his war service in Ethiopia

At the end of the war, Fellowes became a diplomat, and a friend and colleague of Kim Philby. During the late 1940s he was also posted to Cairo with Guy Burgess and Donald Maclean. One of his duties was to work with Burgess, decoding sensitive information, all of which was presumably relayed to Moscow. Although horrified by his friend's treason, Fellowes was never quite able to suppress his affection for Burgess, one of the funniest men he ever knew. Having worked with all three spies, he could only assume that he had been investigated as a possible "fourth man". If he was, nothing but old fashioned patriotism would have been discovered.

His diplomatic career was halted, however, when a wartime attack of tuberculosis flared up in the 1950s, bringing a medical verdict that he could not expect to live beyond 1960. Reluctantly the Foreign Office declined to train him for an ambassadorial role — a disappointment only slightly assuaged, over the years, by his outliving most of his diplomatic contemporaries.

Deeply distressed, he was persuaded by his wife to accompany her to a fortune-teller who, perhaps by previous arrangement, declared that he would live until the age of 72, which still sold him short, but was at least more accurate and encouraging than medical science. Armed with this news, he declined the offer of a consular career and instead joined Shell. He returned to Africa in 1960 and was appointed head of Shell in Nigeria in the heady, optimistic days after that unhappy country's independence. It was a period of great personal and professional satisfaction, but the subsequent civil war and the deaths of many African friends were a source of lasting sorrow to Fellowes and his wife.

Back in London, he was appointed controller of government and trade relations for Shell International, which saw him travelling extensively in the Middle East. After leaving Shell, he continued to work for Middle Eastern cooperation, through the Ford Foundation and his work for Chatham House, and by producing *The New Middle East*, a magazine designed to promote understanding between Arabs and Israelis.

Fellowes had many interests, ranging from comparative religion and philosophy to the works of Eric Gill and Arthur Koestler, but above all his heart was political. An early bohemianism, traces of which could be found in his choice of country wear, and a postwar flirtation with socialism had long since given way to a deeply felt traditional Conservatism. William Hague's abandonment of the hereditary peerage dismayed him, and he was engaged in a campaign to promote Lord Cranborne's compromise as a permanent solution to the House of Lords question at the time of his death. He was a Knight of Malta.

Despite having one of the worst tempers in the Western world, Peregrine Fellowes was fortunate in enjoying not one but two successful marriages. His first wife, Olwen, spotted him on a diving board during a university swimming competition and immediately declared that she was determined to meet and marry him. She did, despite strong opposition from both families on the grounds of their extreme youth, and they were happy together for 45 years until her death from cancer in 1980.

Two years later Fellowes married Lady Maureen, daughter of the 4th Earl of Gainsborough and widow of the 15th Lord Dormer. It was, as he said, "an unlooked for, joyous epilogue" to a varied life. She survives him, along with the four sons of his first marriage.

CHRISTOPHER YORK

Christopher York, landowner and former Conservative MP, died on March 13 aged 89. He was born on July 27, 1909.

A YORKSHIRE landowner and farmer, Christopher York was MP for Ripon, 1939-50, and for Harrogate, 1950-54. A diligent backbencher, he never achieved office, nor really wanted to, but in the postwar period he was a frequent spokesman for his party on agriculture and was admired as a hardworking constituency MP.

Christopher York was the son of Colonel Edward York of Hutton Hall, Long Marston, near York, a considerable North Riding landowner. He was educated at Eton from where he went to Sandhurst and was commissioned into The Royal Dragoons, serving in India. But after four years he left the Army as a lieutenant to qualify himself as a land agent and equip himself for the administration of the family estate. In 1937 he took over the management of his father's property at Long Marston.

His thoughts were also turning to politics. He had for some time been chairman of the Yorkshire Federation of the Junior Imperial League and at a by-election at Ripon early in 1939 he easily held the seat in that staunchly Conservative agricultural heartland. At that stage he was a firm supporter of Neville Chamberlain's appeasement policies in the House of Commons, but when war came a few months later he was re-employed by the Army in the rank of temporary major, and served as a billeting officer in The Royal Dragoons for the remainder of the war.

His House of Commons career did not, therefore, really begin until the end of the war. Ripon, then regarded as one of the safest Tory seats in the country was not affected by the electoral landslide which swept Labour into power and he was able for the next nine years to represent local agricultural interests from the back benches, from 1950 for Harrogate.

York was a conscientious MP and consistently overworked himself. His health, never strong, gave way and in the early 1950s his doctors repeatedly warned him to cut down his workload. In 1954 he resigned his seat and retired to farm and manage his Hutton Wandesley estate, at the same time devoting himself to local public life. He was appointed a Deputy Lieutenant of the West Riding of Yorkshire in 1954 and High Sheriff of Yorkshire in 1966.

He served as President of the Royal Agricultural Society of England in 1979 and had been made an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Veterinary College in 1971.

Christopher York is survived by his wife Pauline, whom he married in 1934, and by his son and three daughters.

DENIS MORRIS

Denis Morris, OBE, former Controller of the BBC Light Programme, died on March 8 aged 91. He was born on June 29, 1907.

DENIS MORRIS brought a great enthusiasm to everything from playing rugby to local council work, BBC management and wine-writing.

He was educated at Tonbridge School, but left before his talent for rugby and cricket had had a chance to develop. For a few years he worked at the family leather firm of George Morris, during which time he had great fun standing in as a signalman on the London to Brighton and South Coast Railway in the General Strike.

He also played for Blackheath RFC, and then for Lyons while spending a year there learning about tanning. Later he played for the Leicester Tigers, and on one occasion he was "carded" by both Leicester and Blackheath for the same game.

He was lured into the advertising business as assistant to one of the directors of Ogilvy & Mather for a short time, but returned to the family firm to work in the Leicester office. During this period he served on Leicester City Council, defeating a Labour incumbent who was due to be made Lord Mayor three days later.

After he retired from the game he began broadcasting about rugby and cricket in his spare time, which led to his joining the BBC Midlands Region as a talks producer in 1936. He began the *Listeners Answer Back* programme, one of the earliest of its kind.

During the war he was director of the Midland Region of the Ministry of Information — one of the earliest public relations officers — and among other things he was involved in showing George VI round Coventry after the devastating raid of November 1940.

He returned to the BBC in Birmingham in 1943 as programme director, a position he held until 1960. During this time he encouraged many producers including Charles Parker, the inventor of the radio ballad, whose *John Axon GM* won the Italia Prize, radio's most coveted award. He was also instrumental in the birth of *The Archers* and helped to plan the death of Grace Archer, which was arranged to coincide with the first night of the new ITV service as a rival attraction. He also did a certain amount of broadcasting himself.

He moved to London in 1960 as chief and subsequently controller of the Light Programme, from which he retired in 1967, having overseen the setting up of Radios 1 and 2. He was happy to be a maverick against the complacency of those at the top of the BBC, whom he saw as "in some ways dedicated and marvellous and in others exceedingly pompous".

His first book, *Poultry Keeping for Profit and Pleasure*, the result of a hobby that helped to pay four sets of school fees, had appeared in 1949 and introduced the cartoonist Thelwell to the world. He also wrote *The French Vineyards* in



1958 after spending three months' leave of absence from the BBC travelling around France with his wife.

He spent 20 years as the wine correspondent of *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Field*, which led to two more books. He also found time to produce the first of many reports on the future of cricket for the MCC (he had been a keen club cricketer for the likes of the Sussex Martlets and the Gentlemen of Leicestershire); to serve on the public relations committee of the Test and County Cricket Board; to act as deputy chairman of the Lord's Taverners' council; to chair the Shoreham Conservative Association and twice act as its president; and to sit on the committee of the St Francis and Lady Chichester Hospitals.

He married twice. His first marriage, from which he had a son who pre-deceased him, was dissolved in 1942. He married Catharine Garrett in 1943 and she survives him, together with their son.

KLAUS GYSI

Klaus Gysi, East German publisher, diplomat and politician died in Berlin on March 6 aged 87. He was born there on March 3, 1912.

AN ABLE diplomat and politician, in the 1980s Klaus Gysi, as Secretary of State for Church Affairs, was given the task by the East German leader Erich Honecker of trying to tame the former German Democratic Republic's Protestant Churches and prevent them from criticising the country's Communist regime. In the event he had been handed a poisoned chalice and though he prided himself on his diplomatic *savoir faire*, he ended up promising Lutheran Church leaders more than he could deliver, and got himself sacked in the process.

The East German churches, mainly Lutheran, had been a permanent thorn in the side of the regime. But Gysi, a renowned conciliator, thought he could win them over and bring them into line with the political establishment. He was convinced that the GDR's relatively liberal religious policies were far superior to those of Moscow. Indeed, in May 1981, addressing the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London — itself an unprecedented event for a Soviet bloc minister — he proudly, if somewhat self-deludingly, described his liberal church policy as a "great historic experiment."

But he was bound to fail, and as Communist power began to crumble, the Protestant Church provided the support needed to express popular discontent. In 1988, at the millennium celebration of the Russian Orthodox Church in Moscow, Gysi rashly promised the presiding East German Lutheran bishop a meeting with the Party's top leadership to iron out differences. But he had not consulted the



Gysi: attempted to tame East Germany's churches

Prime Minister, Willi Stoph, and on his return home he was summarily dismissed by the Politburo.

On July 13 that year the press announced his retirement "on health grounds". That evening he went to a reception at the Italian Embassy and smilingly greeted his host with the words: "Mr Ambassador, I'm sure you can see how ill I am."

Gysi was an untypical member of the *nomenklatura*, the establishment of the GDR. With Swiss antecedents and one Jewish grandparent, he grew up in a middle-class intellectual environment. His father was a doctor who chose to serve the poorest of Berlin's poor. At 16 he joined the Young Communist League.

He studied economics in Frankfurt, Paris, Innsbruck and Berlin but in 1935 — being both partly Jewish and a Communist — he fled from Hitler's Germany to France. Interned briefly when the Second World War started, he then went underground, working first with the French Resistance and later, even more dangerously, in Berlin itself.

In 1945 he was appointed Mayor of the West Berlin borough of Zehlendorf, but a year later began a long, colourful career in East German public life. In the drab greyness of East Berlin bureaucracy, this physically very small, witty iconoclast was an unusual figure whose gently cynical and rather Jewish sense of humour never left him.

He began as editor of the cultural journal *Aufbau* ("Reconstruction") and was from the outset a member of the Volkskammer (East German parliament). From 1949 he was Secretary of the *Kulturbund*, the office for culture, and from 1957 to 1966 the head of the Aufbau Verlag, to this day a significant literary publishing house.

In 1966 he was made Minister of Culture. In that office, if he was not able to to push out the frontiers he nevertheless had the ability to rein in the worst effects of hard-line Stalinism. Asked by a young producer why Andrei Tarkovsky's film *Stalker* could not be shown, he characteristically laughed, clapped the young man on the shoulder and said: "Don't worry, my boy, just wait long enough and we'll have to back down."

In 1973 he was sent as Ambassador to Rome. There, he was popular and enjoyed the company of the Italian cultural elite — cardinals not excluded — much more than that of his comrades at home. His proverbial love of women fitted notions of *la dolce vita* a lot better than the puritanism of the Party. He fathered seven children by a number of liaisons.

In 1979 he was briefly Secretary of the GDR Committee for Security and Co-operation, the Helsinki Treaty process. It was after this that he was called by Honecker to the office of Secretary of State for Church Affairs.

Gysi was no hero and after his political downfall publicly acknowledged that he had served "the red god" for too long. Housebound after a stroke throughout his last years, he was cared for by his much younger actress wife with tender devotion.

He is survived by his wife and his seven children, one of whom, Gregor Gysi, is the parliamentary leader of the Party of Democratic Socialism, the successor to the East German Communist Party.

JOSEPH RANK

Joseph Rank, businessman, died on February 10 aged 80. He was born on April 24, 1918.

HAVING joined a small family business before the war, Joseph Rank left the large combine Ranks Hovis McDougall as chairman in 1981 with some 52,000 employees worldwide. He understood that the business must not overestimate public taste. "The white sliced loaf is what the housewife wants," he said — and it is what she got.

Educated at the Wells House, Malvern Wells, and Loretto, Joseph McArthur Rank was the grandson of the Joseph Rank who in 1875 had formed the family flour-milling business in Hull. He joined his father's flour milling company, Mark Mayhew, in Battersea in 1936.

In 1940 he was called up into the RAF, serving as personal pilot to the AOC 29 Group and later in Transport Command, where he was involved in the bridgehead operations following D-Day. In 1944 he was transferred to South East Asia Command, dropping supplies throughout the Burma campaign. In September 1945 he was appointed personal pilot to Air Chief Marshal Sir Keith Park, before being demobilised in January 1946.

On resuming his career after the war, Mr Joseph (as he was known) became involved in repairing and rebuilding flourmills of the company's that had been bomb damaged during the war.

Declining flour consumption threatened the future of the business, as did the Allied Bakeries Group, whic hhad acquired several British plant bakeries. The decision was taken to buy suitable bakery businesses and Rank became immersed in a major expansion of the group. Rank next acquired agricultural, merchant and feeding stuffs businesses to reduce the company's dependence on flour. Then, after the acquisition of Hovis-McDougall in 1965, Rank became the deputy chairman and chief executive of the new Rank Hovis McDougall.

In 1968 the company acquired the Cerebos Group, including branded names such as Bisto, Paxo stuffing, Saxa and Sifta salt, Scotts Porridge Oats, Atora suet, Chesswoods mushrooms and the Sharwood label. In the 1970s, under Rank's chairmanship these overseas interests were consolidated, with worldwide grocery acquisitions.

Rank maintained a close involvement with the governing body of the Royal Alexander and Albert School from 1952 and with the Royal College of Physicians, where he became an honorary fellow in 1978. He was the first High Sheriff of East Sussex (1974-75).

He is survived by his wife, Moira, only surviving child of 3rd Baron Southborough, and by their son and daughter.

PERSONAL COLUMN

ON THIS DAY

March 18, 1930

Rogue Herries was the first of the Herries saga, the popular and highly successful novels by Hugh Walpole (1884-1941), author and man of letters.

MR HUGH WALPOLE'S NEW ROMANCE

Rogue Herries by Hugh Walpole (Macmillan, 10s 6d, [52p] net.)

A NEW fashion for spacious romance seems to be setting in, and it is a fashion that will be anything but uncongenial to such a born romancer as Mr. Hugh Walpole, as he shows in this very long but highly readable novel. It is a "period" novel, full of carefully studied local colour, with bustling scenes of *ensemble* — fairs, wedding feasts, and junketings — bright dresses and lurid language, with a discreet use of historical events and a great deal of enthusiastic scene painting. The scene is Borrowdale in particular, and the Lake Country in general; the period is from 1730 to 1774; and the central figure is Francis Herries, rake, roysterer, and man of violent passions, who, unlike the majority of his family, was a "dream-monger", a man isolated from his fellows by some kind of inner fatality. As the book opens we find him riding, with his wife, children, servants, and mistress, to take up his abode in the deserted Herries' house at Rosthwaite, in Borrowdale. It is a good rousing opening at an inn in Keswick. What follows is a chronicle of two threads. The life of Francis Herries is that of a man possessed by a strange demon. He becomes legendary in Borrowdale, a romantic, satanic figure, who sells his mistress in the eating booth of a fair, treats his family with alternate brutality and affection, and conceives a strange passion for a gypsy child with flaming red hair, whom he finds again later at the siege of Carlisle in '45, whose lover he sees stabbed, and with whom he contracts a mad marriage in the sequel. Herries, in his latest years, living alone with an old man-servant, wanders with his haunting, scarred face over the fells, seeking for that second wife, Mirabell, who left him because he loved her too madly and she did not love him at all. But he and his wife die happy in the end, at the moment that their child is born.

The other thread is the growth of David, the son, into a Herries of pure breed, good temper and enormous thews, popular all over the dale, a champion at wrestling and singlestick — the essence, in fine, of a normal Englishman. David's protective affection for his father and for his younger sister Deborah is a very sympathetic trait. He prospers in trade and farming, and his one romantic action is to abduct his bride from a curmudgeonly uncle at Wasdale and to fight for his life and love in a fog by Sprinkling Tarn, into which, with a mighty heave, he throws his adversary. Our best view of David is when he presides, a patriarch, at the May Day feast at Fell House, with his family and all the quality around him, and the great Football Game takes place — an epic description — which closes with David's throwing off his mulberry coat and flowered vest, plunging into the fray, and, in combination with Squire Peel's two sons, dribbling the ball between the posts. Like David Herries, this novel of Mr. Walpole's is thoroughly English: it is ample, broad and florid, but moves a little slowly. In fine, this is a tapestry rather than a drama, but woven of rich and substantial material.

NEWS

'No payoffs for eurocrats'

■ No European Commissioner found guilty of fraud or misconduct should receive a payoff. Tony Blair and William Hague agreed. Commissioners could receive payouts worth as much as £300,000, but the Tory leader said that the money should not go to those "forced to resign in disgrace". The Prime Minister said: "In respect of the payoffs, of course, if someone is guilty of fraud or misconduct, those will not apply" .... Pages 1, 15-17

Top school abandons A levels

■ One of Britain's leading independent schools has told parents that it intends to abandon A levels, just two days before the Government announces a reform of the sixth-form curriculum. Sevenoaks School in Kent, the top co-educational school in last year's *Times* examination tables, is to offer only the International Baccalaureate (IB) to new entrants .... Pages 1, 4

Hospital survey

Medical standards in Britain's 300 private hospitals are to be investigated and monitored for the first time under government proposals to stop further health scandals .... Page 1

Policewomen sue

Two women police constables who claim they suffered psychological trauma after the Dunblane massacre are suing their force for £400,000 each .... Page 1

Clinton pressure

President Clinton was last night putting pressure on Northern Ireland leaders to break the deadlock over decommissioning of terrorist arms and push the peace process forward .... Page 2

Case reopened

Police are to conduct DNA tests on more than 200 men after reopening files on a killing 15 years ago known as the "Beauty in the Bath" murder .... Page 5

New car pricing

The pricing of new cars is to be investigated by the monopolies watchdog after a report that lambasts r manufacturers .... Page 6

Rector loses case

A Rector has lost his landmark legal case brought after his bishop decided to reduce the size of his Church of England parish by more than half .... Page 7

Tempting games

Schools are being advised to tempt girls into school sports with aerobics, private shower cubicles and the promise of discos with male athletes .... Page 9

New GM attack

Waitrose and the Co-op joined the supermarket revolt against genetically modified foods yesterday, promising to make their own-label brands "GM free" .... Page 12

Snail's pace

For Mark and Louise Roberts it was the ultimate house-moving nightmare. They had to travel only 55ft — but they were taking their home with them .... Page 13

Serbian 'crime'

A team of Finnish forensic scientists concluded that 40 ethnic Albanians killed at Racak in January were unarmed non-combatants whose deaths were "a crime against humanity" .... Page 18

Olympic crisis

Six members were expelled from the Olympic Committee over the "votes-for-favours" scandal in the biggest crisis in the movement's 106 years .... Page 19

Children 'sold'

Egyptian prosecutors began an investigation into allegations that 25 children died after a charity sold them to private hospitals for organ transplants .... Page 21

Ballooners on the last leg

The British and Swiss pilots who are the closest in history to flying around the world in a balloon are racing towards the finish line with dwindling fuel and heat. Brian Jones, 51, was said to be mentally and physically exhausted as the *Breitling Orbiter 3* flew over Belize last night, on its 17th day and completing its 20,000th mile .... Page 1



Tugar, a six-month old Siberian tiger, enjoys the spring sunshine chasing its keeper's leg at Port Lympe Wild Animal Park, Kent

BUSINESS

Year 2000 warning: One of the City's most senior regulators said that a dozen major financial institutions faced closure or risked operational restrictions because they had failed to address problems arising from the millennium bug .... Page 32

Rate hopes: Prospects brightened for another cut in interest rates after economic data showed a monthly rise in unemployment .... Page 32

TUC plan: John Monks, General Secretary of the Trades Union Congress, fears inter-union turf wars could undermine gains made through the Government's Fairness At Work legislation .... Page 32

Markets: The FTSE100 fell 61.3 to 6140.6. The pound rose .55 cents to $1.6297 and fell .40p to 67.55p against the euro .... Page 32

Football: After defeats by Manchester United and West Ham, Chelsea will be glad of another spell in the lenient land of the Cup Winners' Cup against Valerenga .... Page 56

Rugby union: France have dismissed the Five Nations Championship match against England as no more than a stepping stone on the way to the World Cup .... Page 51

Racing: Call Equiname offered a further tribute to the training skills of Paul Nicholls with victory in the Queen Mother Champion Chase at Cheltenham .... Page 53

Bryant's Eye: If you dream of the ultimate in lazy ways to get fit and then keep fit, then this is most certainly for you. The idea is that you boost your endurance simply by lying in bed .... Page 54

Cinema 1: The best of the week's movies is *Arlington Road*, a nerve-shredding study of suburban paranoia with a magnificent performance by Jeff Bridges .... Page 44

Cinema 2: Thirty years ago British cinemagoers could take their pick of the world's greatest directors. Now the Hollywood mainstream has swept them all away .... Page 44

Full Marx: Seventy years after it was unveiled on Broadway, the anarchic mayhem perfected by the Marx Brothers in *Animal Crackers* is let loose on stage .... Page 45

Dark days: On August 11 Cornwall's ancient sacred sites will be inundated with Pagans and tourists come to witness the eclipse. Marcus Binney checks on the county's preparations .... Page 46

Big wheels: Cars are today's great indicators of a person's class and have given rise to a caste system to rival India's .... Page 22

Drastic plastic: Card issuers wage electronic war on fraud .... Page 22

Dr Thomas Stuttaford: A centre for stammering; why the washing up is vital to those with allergies; mental illness and brain scans; planning for a baby for the millennium; eczema .... Page 23

Survival: Creating opportunity out of crisis: how companies can survive a disaster .... Pages 35, 36

Reviews: Ed Koch revels in a New York history. Plus reviews of work by Daniel Farson, John Tosh, Peter Taylor .... Pages 42, 43

Best buys: Easter camp for the children; late cross-country skiing; last-minute Barbados break .... Page 47

If America is willing to pay the price of defending Kosovo, then it should do so in a way that moves the situation toward the strategic objective of getting rid of Milosevic and minimising the anger Kosovo could present to its neighbours
- *The Washington Post*

TOMORROW

IN THE TIMES

■ **MEDIA**
What is happening with Phil Redmond and the series he created

■ **EDUCATION**
Can the music of Mozart make your baby into a genius?

RADIO & TV

Preview: An asteroid could strike the Earth (BBC2, 9.30pm) **Review:** Joe Joseph on Diana's gardens of discontent .... Pages 54, 55

OPINION

Wanted, office cleaner

If the European Commission is to win the respect of the public it has not only to shed its arrogance and clean house: it must put a stop to the otiose intrusiveness that people rightly resent .... Page 25

Welcome Bac

The import of the International Baccalaureate into British schools is good news, as it addresses many of the A level's faults .... Page 25

Better late than never

The Foreign Secretary is to be commended for a White Paper that rights a colonial wrong .... Page 25

ANATOLE KALETSKY

The Europhiles need not despair and Eurosceptics should certainly not celebrate. Perverse as it may seem, this week may mark a great leap forward for the "European Project" .... Page 24

MAGNUS LINKLATER

With 50 days to go to the first Scottish elections, the awful whiff of defeat hangs like cordite in the air. How else to explain the Chancellor's hurried journey north, his greatcoat slung across his shoulders, Napoleon-style? .... Page 24

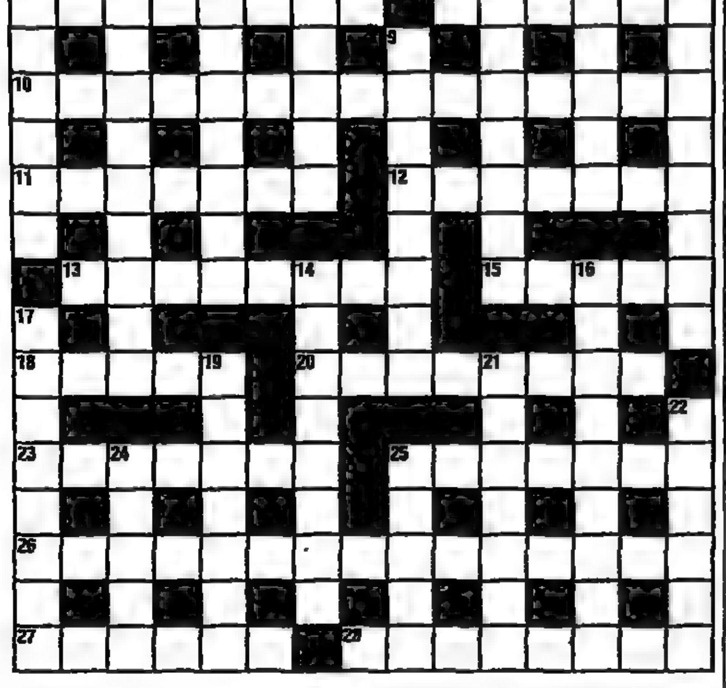
SRDJA TRIFKOVIC

Britain and America are poised to wage war on a European nation just because it has the temerity to believe in itself. Serbia is threatened with a bombing offensive because it acts as any proud nation would — refusing to have foreign troops colonising its soil .... Page 24

Peregrine Fellowes, diplomat; **Klaus Gysi**, East German politician; **Denis Morris**, BBC executive and writer; **Christopher York**, former Conservative MP; **Joseph Rank**, businessman .... Page 27

Vehicle taxes; ways to repel sharks; limits imposed on medical training; full-time motherhood; British Library closure; decline in volunteers; prayer and shopping; wedding gifts .... Page 25

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 21,054



ACROSS

1 Bring in navy to intimidate the whole county (8).
5 Be sad about besieging city, such as Leningrad (6).
10 Inferior experimental treatment all right to include in collection of notes etc. (11,4).
11 Decide to have another go at crossword? (7).
12 Detective's job to get copy of picture (7).
13 Broadcast listener received in part of Ireland (8).
15 Food is cooked, holding such a party (5).
18 Like gardens with odd angles (5).
20 Commander scowled and looked embarrassed (8).
23 Scandalous revelations of model involved in kinky sex (7).
25 Expletive with which poet's expelling a rude interrupter (7).
26 Being poised, holding girl's back and getting in right mood, perhaps, for this? (8,7).
27 Miss one's lines? Clever fish! (3-3).
28 It's good to get whatever reward, said cupholder (8).

DOWN

1 Author's cooler, having to go into business (6).
2 Meat market's up for disposal (4,5).
3 Court has Dickens' little girl up for made-up yarn (7).
4 Drug after drinks can make one fall badly (5).
6 Horse has power, that's plain (7).
7 Girl's love accepted by one chap, head over heels (5).
8 Be successful – in frame of mind to consume a lot of beer (4,4).
9 Letter from minister giving rosy picture of the country (8).
14 School supplier folds before spring (4-4).
16 Endless agony, under singular bombardment (9).
17 Do some work in garden, comfortable in retirement here? (5,3).
19 Wife maybe alters good-for-nothing (7).
21 Weird bunch missing outside an American city (7).
22 Agreed to cook a sweet (6).
24 Friendly pressure put on colleague (5).
25 Hercules, young daredevil, repeatedly attacked heads belonging to this (5).

Solution to Puzzle No 21,053

PROCRUSTES A E
E A N E ASSISI
INSPADES W R S
O E E TANGIBLE
I T R B R N
BRIO SEETHROUGH
L W T D E S O
URANIUM MATTHEW
E P D P V R E
BLOODYMARY AJAR
O S R M P S
TUTORIAL E P W
T A O OFTTIMES
LESSON U A S L
E Y ABSOLUTELY

Times Two Crossword, page 56

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HOURS OF DARKNESS



Sun rises: 6.09 am — Sun sets: 6.09 pm
Moon sets: 7.09 pm — Moon rises: 6.48 am
First quarter March 24

London 6.09 pm to 6.06 am
Bristol 6.19 pm to 6.18 am
Edinburgh 6.22 pm to 6.19 am
Manchester 6.18 pm to 6.15 am
Penzance 6.31 pm to 6.28 am

WEATHER

☐ **General:** south-east England and East Anglia will start cloudy with one or two outbreaks of rain, clearing to leave some sunshine. It will turn cooler with showers returning this afternoon. The rest of England and Wales will also be cooler than recently, with a mix of sunny spells and showers. Northern Ireland and Western Scotland will also have showers. It will become more windy and, as the showers turn increasingly wintry, there will be blizzards across the Highlands. Eastern Scotland will escape the worst and be mostly dry with better sunny spells.

☐ **London, SE England, E Anglia, Central S England, E Midlands, E England:** early patchy rain, then brighter but cooler with sunny spells and showers. A light north-westerly wind. Max 13C (55F).

☐ **W Midlands, S Wales, N Wales, NW England, Lake District, Isle of Man:** sunny spells but cool with showers. A moderate north-westerly wind. Max 12C (54F).

☐ **Channel Islands, SW England:** cooler than recently with isolated showers, but some sunshine. A moderate north-westerly wind. Max 12C (54F).

☐ **Central N England, NE England:** increasingly windy with isolated showers but some good sunny spells. A freshening westerly wind. Max 11C (52F).

☐ **Borders, Edinburgh & Dundee, Aberdeen, Moray Firth, NE Scotland:** colder than recently with the odd shower, but some decent sunny spells in areas sheltered from the wind. A freshening westerly wind. Max 9C (45-48F).

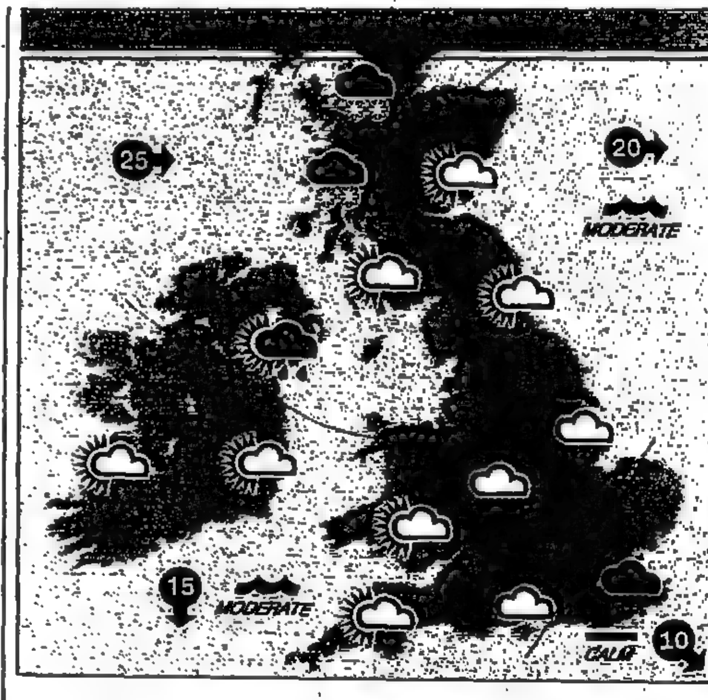
☐ **SW Scotland, Glasgow, Argyll, NW Scotland, Orkney, Shetland:** sunny breaks but showery and blustery, the showers turning increasingly wintry. A fresh to strong westerly wind. Max 8C (46F).

☐ **Central Highlands:** frequent heavy sleet and snow showers with winds increasing to give blizzard conditions at times. A strong to near-gale westerly wind. Max 7C (45F).

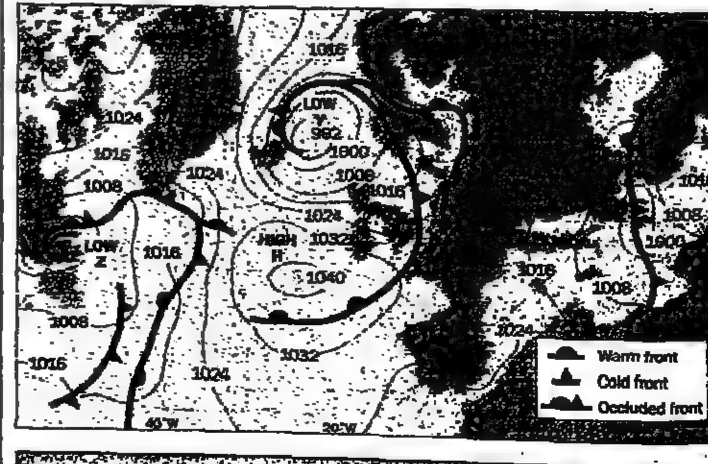
☐ **N Ireland:** cool and breezy with showers and sunny spells. A fresh west to north-westerly wind. Max 10C (50F).

☐ **Irish Republic:** dry and bright with sunny spells, mainly in east. Southwesterly wind, light to moderate. Warm, max 16C (61F).

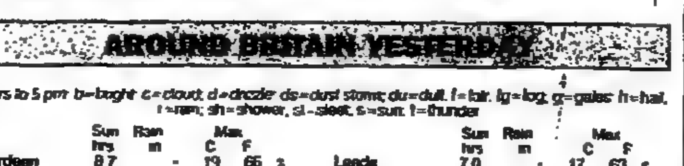
☐ **Outlook:** tomorrow will continue cool with further sunny spells and showers, the showers increasingly of sleet and snow in Scotland where it will be windy. Rain will edge into Northern Ireland and Western Scotland later and it will become cloudier everywhere on Saturday with rain in the north and the best sunny breaks in the south-west.



Changes to the chart below from noon: Low Y will move slowly north and fill gradually. High H will remain slow moving while low Z will move northeast and fill



AROUND BRITAIN YESTERDAY



24 hrs to 5 pm: b=bright; c=cloud; d=drizzle; ds=dust storm; du=dull; f=fair; fg=fog; g=gales; h=hail; r=rain; sh=shower; sl=sleet; s=sun; t=thunder

	Sun hrs	Rain in	Max C	Max F	
Aberdeen	8.7	-	19	66	s
Anglesey	8.9	0.01	12	54	fg
Aspatria	3.2	-	11	52	c
Aviemore	4.6	0.01	13	55	s
Belfast	7.4	-	15	59	s
Birmingham	10.6	-	20	68	s
Bognor R	10.1	-	17	63	s
Bournemth	8.2	-	18	64	s
Bristol	8.7	-	20	68	s
Cardiff	7.3	-	20	68	s
Clacton	9.5	-	9	48	s
Colwyn Bay	6.8	-	11	52	fg
Cromer	9.1	-	12	54	s
Eastbourne	8.9	-	14	57	s
Edinburgh	5.4	-	14	57	s
Eskdalemuir	3.1	0.01	12	54	b
Exmouth	10.3	-	17	63	s
Fishguard	9.6	-	13	55	s
Folkestone	7.9	-	15	59	b
Glasgow	2.4	0.01	11	52	b
Guernsey	6.3	-	13	55	s
Hastings	6.2	-	13	55	s
Hayling I.	9.2	-	14	57	s
Herne Bay	9.0	-	14	57	s
Hove	7.0	-	14	57	s
Hunstanton	9.6	-	17	63	s
Isle of Man	-	0.01	10	50	fg
Isle of Wight	X	0.01	18	64	s
Kinloss	4.6	-	15	59	s
Leeds	7.0	-	17	63	s
Lerwick	1.0	0.05	9	48	fg
Leuchars	9.6	-	14	57	s
Littlehampton	10.5	-	17	63	s
London	9.9	-	20	68	s
Lowestoft	6.0	-	12	54	s
Manchester	2.3	-	13	55	s
Margate	6.4	-	12	54	s
Morecambe	0.7	0.01	10	50	b
Newcastle	7.9	-	14	57	s
Newquay	10.4	0.01	15	59	s
Norwich	8.0	-	18	64	s
Oxford	9.9	-	19	66	s
Penzance	10.8	-	15	59	s
Poole	10.2	0.01	20	68	s
Ross on Wye	8.7	-	21	70	s
Saunton Sands	5.5	-	15	59	s
Scarborough	7.3	-	15	59	s
Shrewsbury	9.3	0.01	18	64	s
Skegness	8.3	-	15	59	s
Southend	9.9	-	11	52	s
Southsea	9.5	-	17	63	s
Stornoway	0.9	0.01	10	50	d
Swanage	10.1	-	18	64	s
Teignmouth	10.4	-	15	59	s
Tenby	9.5	0.01	17	63	s
Tiree	2.8	0.01	10	50	s
Torquay	10.0	-	17	63	s
Weymouth	10.3	-	14	57	s

ABROAD

	C	F	
Ajaccio	17	63	s
Akrotiri	18	64	s
Alex'dria	19	66	s
Algiers	17	63	c
Amst'dm	11	52	s
Athens	17	63	s
Bahrain	23	73	s
Bangkok	34	93	s
Barbados	23	82	f
Barcelona	21	70	s
Beijing	3	37	c
Beirut	16	61	s
Belgrade	5	41	c
Berlin	2	36	c
Bermuda	19	66	f
Biarritz	12	54	c
Bordeaux	19	66	s
Brussels	10	50	s
Budapest	2	36	f
B Aires	23	73	f
Cairo	21	70	s
Cape Tn	26	79	s
Chicago	8	46	s
Ch'church	19	66	X
Cologne	10	50	s
C'phagn	2	36	c
Corfu	16	61	c
Dublin	14	57	s
Dubrovnik	15	59	s
Faro	18	64	s
Florence	19	66	s
Frankfurt	8	45	f
Funchal	17	63	c
Geneva	11	52	s
Gibraltar	17	63	f
Helsinki	0	32	s
Hong K	16	61	c
Innsbruck	12	54	f
Istanbul	7	45	f
Jeddah	29	84	s
Jo'burg	23	73	f
L Palmas	21	70	c
Le Touquet	11	52	s
Lisbon	18	64	s
Locarno	17	63	s
L Angeles	12	54	s
Luxembg	11	52	s
Luxor	27	81	s
Madrid	17	63	c
Majorca	20	68	s
Malaga	17	63	s
Malta	20	68	s
Melbourne	19	66	f
Mexico C	21	70	s
Miami	22	72	s
Milan	15	59	s
Montreal	3	37	s
Moscow	-3	27	s
Munich	9	48	s
Nairobi	24	75	f
Naples	19	66	s
N Delhi	28	82	s
N York	8	46	s
Nice	19	66	s
Oslo	0	32	sn
Paris	14	57	s
Perth	31	88	f
Prague	1	34	c
Reykjavik	1	34	c
Rhodes	16	61	s
Rio de J	24	75	f
Riyadh	26	79	s
Rome	21	70	s
R'ndaway	10	50	s
Salzburg	8	46	f
S Frisco	11	52	f
Santiago	23	73	s
Seoul	17	63	s
Singapore	32	90	f
Stockholm	2	36	f
Strasb'rg	12	54	X
Sydney	24	75	f
Tangier	17	63	f
Tel Aviv	18	64	f
Tenerife	21	70	s
Tokyo	16	61	s
Toronto	7	45	s
Tunis	18	64	c
Valencia	21	70	s
Vanc'ver	6	43	s
Venice	14	57	f
Vienna	4	39	c
Warsaw	4	39	f
Wash'ton	11	52	s
Wellington	21	70	X
Zurich	11	52	s

Temperatures at midday local time on Tuesday. X – not available

HIGH TIDES

TODAY	AM	HT	PM	HT
Aberdeen	1:36	4.3	13:42	4.5
Avonmouth	7:36	13.9	19:57	13.9
Belfast	11:19	3.6	23:45	3.4
Cardiff	7:22	12.8	19:43	12.8
Devonport	6:04	5.7	18:27	5.6
Dover	11:18	6.8	23:41	6.9
Dublin	11:47	4.3	-	-
Falmouth	5:35	5.5	17:58	5.4
Greenock	0:48	3.2	13:10	3.5
Harwich	0:00	4.0	12:26	4.2
Holyhead	10:38	5.9	23:02	5.7
Hull (Albert D)	6:40	8.8	18:48	9.1
Ilfracombe	6:21	9.6	18:42	9.6
King's Lynn	6:40	7.1	18:48	7.7
Leith	2:52	5.7	15:06	5.8
Liverpool	11:37	9.9	23:59	9.8
London Bridge	2:03	7.4	14:29	7.6
Lowestoft	9:57	2.4	21:57	2.6
Margate	0:02	4.9	12:37	4.9
Milford Haven	6:33	7.3	18:54	7.3
Newquay	5:24	7.3	17:45	7.3
Oban	6:09	4.2	18:25	4.1
Penzance	4:54	5.8	17:14	5.6
Portland	7:36	2.2	20:07	2.1
Portsmouth	11:38	4.7	-	-
Shoreham	11:32	6.4	23:59	6.6
Southampton	11:13	4.6	23:41	4.7
Swansea	6:40	12.8	19:00	12.7
Tees	4:04	10.0	16:11	10.2
Walton-On-Naze	-	-	12:15	4.9

All times GMT. Heights in metres

HIGHEST & LOWEST

Yesterday: highest day max: Shobdon, Hereford and Worcester, 21C (70F); lowest day max: Lerwick, Shetland, 9C (48F); highest rainfall: Kirkwall Airport, Orkney, 0.15ins; highest sunshine: Penzance, 10.8 hrs

Cheltenham Gold Cup Form

Sport, page 52

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THE TIMES 2

MacGowan live. Just.

Arts, page 45

BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft THURSDAY MARCH 18 1999

FSA threatens to shut 12 top firms over bug

By Caroline Merrell
Banking Correspondent

A DOZEN leading financial institutions have been put on notice by the chief City watchdog that they face closure because they are so far behind in their preparedness for dealing with the so-called millennium bug.

The Financial Services Authority (FSA) has written to 12 of the UK's biggest financial companies warning them that, in its opinion, their systems are not on track to be year 2000 compliant in time.

According to Michael Foot, managing director of financial supervision at the FSA, the institutions involved are either "household names" or at least "very widely known" firms.

Mr Foot said: "In the last resort and where it is apparent there is no better way to protect depositors, investors, policyholders, or the integrity of markets, we will take action to restrict a firm's business or in extreme cases to remove its authorisation altogether."

Letters from the FSA to notified financial companies have demanded that they prove they are on track to be year 2000 compliant. The regulator says it has yet to receive any replies.

Mr Foot told a conference yesterday on the financial sector's year 2000 readiness that the 12 firms identified were from a total of 160 that are classified as "high impact" institutions. The failure of a high impact company would have serious consequences for retail customers and the markets.

He refused to give the names of the companies for legal reasons although the high-impact group includes retail and investment banks, insurance companies and building societies.

The FSA has also written to another 50 companies, in the so-called "medium-impact" group, warning them that their systems are not up to scratch.

A spokesman for the FSA said that no organisation under its aegis is yet to have its "green" category of being 100 per cent millennium compliant.

According to figures to the end of 1998, 58 per cent of the high-impact groups were on track and 35 per cent at "amber" — as yet behind but likely to get on track. In the medium-impact group, 40 per cent were on track, 45 per cent were at amber while 15 per cent were at "red" — or non-compliant.

Mr Foot declined to give a specific deadline ahead of the turn of the year for initiating legal action against companies that were not millennium compliant.

He said: "With over nine months to go before the millennium the conditions to justify such measures have not yet manifested themselves. As the year goes on, however, time runs out."

The high-impact firms under threat have the capital to beat the millennium bug but have simply ignored the potential risks or have not seen it as a serious threat to the market, Mr Foot said.

In the area of counterparty risk, implying situations where a UK company itself is compliant but can be affected by a non-compliant counterparty in another country, the FSA said it was advising firms on precautionary actions.

The British Bankers' Association disputed that its members, the retail banks, were facing problems. It said UK banks had recently been complimented by the US State Department on their readiness. Barclays Bank said that its systems were at present 90 per cent compliant and would be ready by this summer.

Commentary, page 31

Michael Foot, the FSA's financial supervisor, said that the institutions concerned were either "household names" or "very widely known" firms

Rise in jobless boosts prospect of rate cut

By Alasdair Murray
Economics Correspondent

UNEMPLOYMENT began to rise in February while wage growth cooled further, leaving the City confident that interest rate cuts remain on the agenda of the Bank of England.

The minutes of this month's meeting of the Bank's Monetary Policy Committee, out yesterday, also dispelled market fears that the Bank had called a halt to its rate-cutting spree.

Although only Willem Buiter, an independent member of the committee, voted in favour of an immediate cut, the tone of the minutes suggested that the MPC still has a bias towards further easing.

Claimant count unemployment rose by 4,300 in February to 1.31 million. The Government's preferred International Labour Force measure of unemployment also ticked up by 37,000 to 1.84 million in the three months to January.

However, the size of the workforce again reached a record, rising 119,000 in the three months to January to 27.32 million. Analysts said that the apparent discrepancy in the figures reflected a continued influx into the labour force of people who are not claiming benefits.

The newly reinstated average earnings confirmed that wage inflation is cooling. The December headline figure fell from 4.5 per cent to 4.3 per cent, while the provisional January estimate of 4.2 per cent suggests wage growth is likely to slow further in coming months.

The rise in unemployment and decline in earnings growth brought an immediate response from business and unions, who argued that the door is now open for further rate cuts from the current 5.5 per cent.

The MPC March minutes revealed that the committee accepted that the strong pound, weaker than expected GDP growth and slowing wage inflation implied a "slightly lower prospective inflation than thought at the time of the February inflation report".

The Bank also displayed few concerns over the contents of the Budget, despite City fears that Gordon Brown's tax cuts could persuade the Bank to postpone further rate cuts. However, the slight improvement in survey readings led the committee to conclude there was not quite a "sufficient case" for a sixth consecutive cut.

The renewed hopes of interest rate cuts had little impact on the stock market, which followed Wall Street lower. The FTSE 100 index of leading shares closed down 61.3 points at 6,140.6.

The pound also lost ground against the euro but made modest gains against the dollar. The euro rose from 67.15p to 67.55p, while the pound climbed half a cent to $1.6297.

LINKS
WEBSITE: www.bankofengland.co.uk/
Weekend Money website:
http://www.times-money.co.uk

Mulcahy says no fresh deals in pipeline

By Sarah Cunningham

KINGFISHER, the B&Q to Woolworths retail group, saw its underlying profits jump 15 per cent last year as it reaped the benefits of its rapid overseas expansion.

In what it called a "milestone year" the company merged its B&Q DIY arm with France's Castorama, creating Europe's largest DIY group. Expansion of the group's electricals business in France and Germany made it the third-largest European electricals retailer.

But Sir Geoffrey Mulcahy, chief executive, yesterday played down expectations that another deal, possibly in Germany, was imminent. "The number one priority is to concentrate on developing the businesses that we've got. Opportunities to expand are not entirely within our gift."

About 40 per cent of annualised sales are now from outside the UK, he said, and he expects the split to be even within two to three years.

Profits before exceptional items and tax in the year to January 30 — which includes one month of Castorama profits — rose from £505 million to £582.5 million on turnover up from £6.41 billion to £7.46 billion.

Expansion of the group's portfolio is continuing with plans to open 103 stores this year, creating 4,800 jobs, with 3,200 of them in the UK.

The company confirmed plans to open an out-of-town Woolworths, named "Big W", near Edinburgh in June. It will carry Woolworths usual ranges, plus goods from its Superdrug and Comet subsidiaries. It will also have a garden centre, fast food from Burger King and adult clothing from Peacocks. The company is looking for other sites in the UK for further trial stores.

A final dividend of 9.25p makes a total for the year of 13p up 13 per cent. The shares fell 17p to 793p after profit-taking on the stock that this week hit an all-time high of 813½p.

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City Diary, page 33



Business Today

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Foot scares the children 31
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Unit trusts: 39



Graham Searjeant
on our chance to reform EU budget

Page 33

STOCK MARKET INDICES

FTSE 100	6140.6	(-61.3)
Yield	2.58%	
FTSE All Share	2836.90	(-25.41)
Nikkei	16268.11	(+195.29)
New York:		
Dow Jones	9880.24	(-50.23)*
S&P Composite	1294.41	(-11.97)*

US RATE

Federal Funds	[illegible]%*	([illegible]%)
Long bond	96[illegible]*	(96[illegible])
Yield	5.50%*	(5.47%)

LONDON MONEY

3-mth Interbank	5[illegible]%	(5[illegible]%)
Liffe long gilt future (Jun)	117.68	(117.22)

STERLING

New York:		
$	1.6303*	(1.6292)
London:		
$	1.6296	(1.6243)
€	1.4803	(1.4890)
SFr	2.3652	(2.3815)
Yen	192.97	(191.45)
£ Index	102.4	(102.8)

DOLLAR

London:		
€	1.1021*	(1.0995)
SFr	1.4483*	(1.4543)
Yen	118.21*	(117.63)
$ Index	107.6	(108.0)

Tokyo close Yen 118.66

NORTH SEA OIL

Brent 15-day (Jun)	$13.25	($12.75)

GOLD

London close	$294.15	($283.95)

* denotes midday trading prices

Exchange rates ....Page 30

Monks calls for a cut in number of unions

By Alasdair Murray

JOHN MONKS, General Secretary of the Trades Union Congress, yesterday launched a radical campaign to modernise the union movement, calling for a drastic reduction in the total number of unions and new membership recruitment procedures.

The TUC is concerned that gains made through the Government's Fairness at Work legislation could be undermined if inter-union turf wars erupt over union recognition cases.

However, Mr Monks also made it clear that he wants to set an ambitious goal of building a more logical and efficient union structure over the next ten years, which will accommodate the changing nature of the workplace. He said: "I want to see fewer unions in Britain, organised more logically. That is not to say there is no role for smaller specialist unions or that bigger unions can be broken up and put back together again, but there is still scope for modernisation."

In the short term the TUC is keen to establish a more thorough procedure to deal with inter-union disputes arising from the new union recognition legislation. The Central Arbitration Committee, which is to review recognition cases, has already made it clear that it will not proceed with any recognition applications where there is any evidence of inter-union rivalry.



Monks: logical structure

The TUC fears that failed recognition cases could undermine the credibility of the new system unless TUC-supported guidelines and sanctions for unions who break the rules are strengthened.

The long-term aim is to simplify union structure and make it easier for workers who change jobs to move their membership. As part of this process, Mr Monks would like to see fewer unions based on whole sectors rather than individual jobs. However, he noted that the trend to fewer unions is already in place, with the number of TUC-affiliated unions declining from about 200 to 75 over the past couple of decades. This trend is expected to be continued, with three banking unions reporting the result of their merger ballot next week. Bifu, the NatWest Staff Union and Unifi, the Barclays union, are expected to receive approval to join forces.

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Annunziata pays $12bn for Frontier

GLOBAL CROSSING, a fledgeling US phone company with barely $1 billion in annual sales, yesterday paid $12.5 billion (£7.7 billion) in cash and stock for Frontier, a US long-distance carrier (Andrew Butcher writes from New York).

The latest deal in the US telecoms merger revolution is the first move by Robert Annunziata, the former AT&T executive, who became chief executive of Global Crossing last month.

Global Crossing is just two years old and went public last August. Mr Annunziata said yesterday that the company was looking to buy more local phone companies. "Merging with Frontier will enable us to greatly accelerate our aggressive growth strategy."

Mr Annunziata built Teleport Communications into a $13 billion group before it was bought by AT&T last year. Global Crossing started out building undersea fibre-optic cables for the likes of Deutsche Telekom, but has quickly expanded into phone and data services through the Internet.



New bank gives good account of itself

By Caroline Merrell
Banking Correspondent

STANDARD LIFE, the latest entrant to the British banking industry, said yesterday that it had received applications for £3.2 billion worth of mortgages since the launch of its bank at the beginning of the year.

In January alone, Standard Life Bank claimed that its net share of all new UK mortgages was 30 per cent. Jim Spowart, its managing director, trumpeted: "We have taken the market by storm."

The new bank put its success down to its low mortgage rate — currently 6.05 per cent — which is almost a point lower than Halifax's variable rate of 6.95 per cent.

Mr Spowart said that the bank had originally expected to have £1 billion worth of mortgages by the end of the year. The market reaction had been such that those targets have been upgraded to £2.5 billion worth of mortgages within the first year.

In the first eight weeks of business the bank said that it had completed £150 million worth of mortgages. Mr Spowart said that most of the lending was remortgage business from the high street lenders, which are dominated by the floated former building societies such as Halifax, Abbey National and Woolwich.

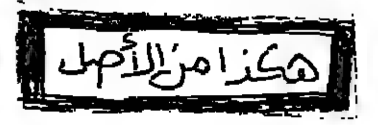
He said that interest had reflected Standard Life Bank's innovative "Freestyle" mortgage product, which offers daily interest calculation and no arrangement fees, although it had also been helped by competitive interest rates, which had dropped 0.75 points since the January launch.

If Standard Life Bank were to achieve its £2.5 billion target, this would equate to a UK market share of about 3 per cent.

The bank also said that it had taken more than £2.4 billion in savings deposits from more than 200,000 customers.

The entry of Standard Life, Europe's largest mutual life insurer, into the mortgage and deposits market prompted fears among its high street rivals already threatened by increased competition and the likelihood of thinner margins.

The launch of Standard Life in the banking market followed hard on the heels of the launch of Egg by Prudential Corporation's new banking arm. Egg recently reported that it had taken £3 billion in deposits since its October launch, although interest may have dissipated after a fall in savings rates since its initial headline-grabbing rate of 8 per cent gross.



US success highlights dangers facing Smiths

By Paul Armstrong

INVESTORS yesterday sliced 10 per cent off the value of Smiths Industries, the engineering group, amid fears that it now depended too heavily on the booming US aerospace industry.

The concerns were enough to overshadow an 11 per cent rise in Smiths' interim pre-tax profit to £99 million and left the stock 106½p lower on the day at 953p.

Smiths said profit from its aerospace division leapt 42 per cent to £38 million, mainly because of high levels of civil jet production.

The fears about Smiths' income stream were compounded by figures showing that, for the first time, its US operations accounted for half the company's profit.

Jeremy Andrews, an analyst with Greig Middleton, said: "Clearly it is a worrying issue because the other businesses are as flat as a pancake."

An interim dividend of 7.4p was declared, up from 6.75p previously.

Smiths has been a market darling in recent months, with its shares running from 624p since October on the back of strong organic profit growth.

Alan Thomson, finance director, said the company believed that a slowdown in civil jet production next year would be offset totally by increased military orders.

"These military programmes will start building up very strongly and give us some very large profit growth starting in 2001," Mr Thomson said. "This will go on for as much as ten years."

He said the medical systems and industrial divisions, which contributed profits of £32.5 million and £32.2 million respectively, were feeling the impact of the strong exchange rate for sterling and, to a lesser extent, the Asian crisis.

The outlook for Smiths' industrial products in the UK and Europe remained "fairly flat".

Smiths spent £88 million buying five business in the US and UK during the period, driving net debt to £140 million from £83 million.

Initial integration costs prevented the new businesses from contributing to the interim profit, although they are expected to add to the full-year result.

Mr Thomson said that although Smiths' interest cover was running at 30 times, it had no plans to make a share buyback.

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DENZIL McNEELANCE



Keith Butler-Wheelhouse, chief executive at Smiths, which saw interim profits rise 11 per cent

Waterfall appoints Garrett

John Garrett, the former Rank Group director, has been appointed chairman of Waterfall Holdings, fuelling speculation that the leisure group is poised to intervene in the proposed £68 million merger between European Leisure and Allied Leisure. European already has a 24 per cent stake in Waterfall.

Brixton on the up

Brixton Estates, the property company that specialises in industrial estates, reported a 17.3 per cent rise in net asset value to 244p a share in the year to December 31. The company reported 1998 pre-tax profits of £40.5 million (£37.8 million). The total dividend rises to 9.7p (9.3p) with a final 6.235p.

Apax euro fund

Apax Partners, the venture capital firm, has launched the first private equity investment fund denominated in euros. Apax Europe IV has raised €1.8 billion (£1.2 billion) from institutional investors.

Rea shines

Full-year profits at Rea Brothers, the merchant bank and financial services group, rose by 3 per cent to £3.6 million in 1998. The full-year dividend was raised to 1.75p from 1.25p.

Renault cash may not save Nissan

From Robert Whymant in Tokyo

NISSAN, the troubled Japanese car company, may yet struggle to stay afloat despite a promised £3.27 billion cash injection by France's Renault, according to car industry analysts in Tokyo.

Renault is expected to inject some Y640 billion of fresh capital into Nissan, Japan's second-largest carmaker behind Toyota, and also acquire a stake in its truck-making affiliate, Nissan Diesel.

But even with this cash infusion, Nissan can only write-off part of its massive debts of Y2.13 trillion (£11 billion).

It is uncertain whether the proposed 35 per cent stake will give Renault enough management control to carry out urgently needed reforms and turn around Japan's ailing car giant. The alliance may also need to recruit another partner as competition intensifies in global markets.

An official at Toyota, Nissan's fiercest rival, said: "If Nissan joined up with DaimlerChrysler or Ford, that would be alarming. But the threat from a tie-up with Renault is not of the same nature."

Nissan was previously in talks with DaimlerChrysler, until the German-US carmaker, apparently deterred by the Japanese firm's debt load, ended negotiations last week.

Hepworth to play part in mergers

HEPWORTH, the building products company, committed itself yesterday to playing an "active role" in a spate of mergers and acquisitions that it predicts will punctuate its industry over the coming months. Jean-François Chène, chief executive, said that Hepworth would focus on its heating and pipe-making activities.

Yesterday Hepworth posted a 17 per cent increase in operating profit to £60.4 million for 1998. The shine was taken off the results, however, when the company issued a warning about trading. "The first two months of 1999 have shown weaker than expected demand. January was poor," said M Chène. Pre-tax profits were £64.5 million, against losses of £11.7 million last time. The pre-tax profits picture was distorted by a raft of exceptional costs incurred in 1997. The rise in underlying profitability came about as Hepworth cut operating costs. There was only a small change in annual sales. The final dividend is 6.25p, compared with 6p, which makes a total for the year of 9.25p (9p). Tempus, page 32

Toad leaps into profit

TOAD, the car security company backed by Noel Edmonds, the television presenter, and Chris Evans, the biotech entrepreneur, yesterday reported its first profit since its incorporation in 1993. The company reported pre-tax profits of £432,000 for the 38 weeks to December 22, compared with losses of £2.6 million for the year ended March 31, 1998. Boosted by acquisitions, sales were £25 million (£9.6 million). Previous losses per share of 9.46p turned into earnings of 0.76p. The shares rose 2p to 21½p.

Shield-Axis deal

SHIELD DIAGNOSTICS moved closer to becoming a world leader in the detection of heart diseases when it finally agreed a merger with Axis Biochemicals, its Norwegian rival. Talks began in January but the marriage was delayed after two large Axis shareholders rejected the terms. Revised terms, announced yesterday, will give Axis shareholders 45.6 per cent of the new group and Shield 54.4 per cent. The original split had been 38 to 62 per cent in Shield's favour.

Schawk raises offer

THE auction for Wace, the printing group, hotted up yesterday when Schawk, the US bidder, was forced to raise its offer after the emergence last week of a US counterbidder. Schawk said that it was raising its offer to 80p a share, valuing Wace at £63.3 million. This is up from from its original offer of 72p a share, which had been trumped by an offer from Applied Graphics Technologies of 74p a share. Yesterday AGT said in turn that it is "actively considering increasing its offer".

Midshires record

BIRMINGHAM MIDSHIRES, the building society being absorbed by the Halifax next month, enjoyed a record year in 1998. Midshires, which is distributing £750 million to its members as part of the sale, saw pre-tax profits before exceptionals rise 11 per cent to £88.4 million. Mortgage advances jumped 36 per cent to £1.28 billion. The society attracted 60,000 new savers and saw balances grow £591.5 million to £5.9 billion. Total income rose to £202 million, up 10.3 per cent.

Regent plans control

REGENT INNS, the pub operator that is in merger talks with SFI Group, is planning to acquire a controlling stake in its Bar Risa/Jongleurs joint venture. It owns 49 per cent of the business, which has six units. In the half year to January 2, Regent's pre-tax profits dived from £9 million to £6.4 million. Although earnings per share dipped to 6.1p (9.2p), the interim dividend is up 10 per cent to 1.43p. Like-for-like sales in the first 36 weeks were up 2.6 per cent.

EXCHANGE RATES

	Bank Buys	Bank Sells
Australia $	2.69	2.51
Austria Sch	21.40	19.74
Belgium Fr	63.00	58.04
Canada $	2.598	2.408
Cyprus Cyp £	0.9024	0.8309
Denmark Kr	11.61	10.72
Egypt	5.75	5.14
Finland Mkk	9.37	8.62
France Fr	10.19	9.41
Germany Dm	3.063	2.821
Greece Dr	502	463
Hong Kong $	13.45	12.25
Iceland	129	109
Indonesia	18290	13290
Ireland Pt	1.2221	1.1331
Israel Shk	6.89	6.23
Italy Lira	3048	2809
Japan Yen	207.99	190.46
Malta	0.674	0.615
Netherlds Gld	3.458	3.163
New Zealand $	3.23	2.99
Norway Kr	13.25	12.31
Portugal Esc	309.77	287.74
S Africa Rd	10.77	9.81
Spain Pta	258.17	239.38
Sweden Kr	14.11	13.01
Switzerland Fr	2.523	2.309
Turkey Lira	608289	567857
USA $	1.735	1.592

Rates for small denomination banknotes only as supplied by Barclays Bank. Different rates apply to traveller's cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.

Oil prices surge as supply cuts bite

By Our City Staff

OIL prices surged again yesterday, as exporting countries began to implement new supply curbs agreed last week.

In London, Benchmark Brent crude futures rose 64 cents to $13.32 a barrel. Dealers said that Saudi Arabia's move to inform customers of an immediate cut in sales volumes helped to lift a market that has been sceptical of the accord struck last week in The Hague.

But Saudi Arabia, the biggest contributor to the new supply limits, yesterday led by example the campaign to convince traders that oil producers mean business.

The Saudi pledge to cut output by 585,000 barrels per day represents 34 per cent of Opec's 1.718 million contribution to the accord, which includes an additional 286,000 bpd from three non-Opec nations.

Algeria was also preparing to tell its customers of immediate supply cuts and Iran pressed forward quickly with its curbs. There was no immediate sign from Libya or Nigeria of any adjustment to their April exports.

Clydeport plans fifth Scottish port

CLYDEPORT, the privatised ports operator, is to create a fifth Scottish port near Glasgow, after a year that saw tonnage through its existing ports rise by 40 per cent.

Clydeport, which operates the ports at Hunterston in Ayrshire, Glasgow and Greenock, is to create a fifth port on the former Scott Lithgow site in Port Glasgow at a cost of £50 million.

Yesterday Clydeport reported a 40 per cent rise in 1998 pre-tax profits to £11 million.

The final dividend is 4.5p with total dividend per share up 17.6 per cent at 6.5p.

Police inquiry into Chelsea Village

By Jason Nisse

A CRIMINAL investigation has been launched into the running of parts of Chelsea Village, the AIM-listed company that owns the Premiership football club.

The investigation is said to centre on certain business transactions by Edward Murray, who was general manager of the Court Hotel, the 160-room hotel built by Chelsea on its Stamford Bridge site in West London. Mr Murray left the company last year.

Michael Russell, Chelsea's finance director, said that the problems between the company and Mr Murray were not related to the construction delays that put back the launch of the hotel from December 1997 until April last year.

Chelsea's problems with its redevelopment plans were highlighted by its chairman, Ken Bates. He said that opposition by the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham to the redevelopment of the West Stand would prove costly to the club — delays to the completion of the hotel had meant that it had a lower than expected occupancy level after its launch.

In the six months to December 31, a near threefold rise in catering revenues helped the company to book a 25 per cent increase in turnover to £45.8 million. Despite this, pre-tax profits rose from £215,000 to only £421,000 and earnings per share from 0.12p to 0.27p. There is no dividend.

The figures brought a sharp drop in Chelsea shares, which ended at 79½p, down 5½p.

Foot frightens the children



COMMENTARY
by our City Editor

No, this was not Michael Foot of the wild hair, gesticulating arms and donkey jacket. The Michael Foot who yesterday made a statement guaranteed to frighten the children was the quiet, sensible, former Bank of England chap. This Michael Foot knows what he is talking about and if he chooses to warn that household names in the financial services business may have to be shut down because they will not be prepared to cope with the millennium bug, then it is time to take notice.

It may be that his statement was intended only to scare the financiers rather than their customers. If you are a regulator who fears that one or two of your flock may not be taking the bug seriously enough, then a public warning on this scale might be a way of making them take notice. Preparing for the introduction of the euro certainly became something of a distraction for some banks in the last few months of last year and their preparations for the dawning of 2000 may have slowed as a result. Perhaps Mr Foot fears thay have not yet got back to speed.

But he is in a position to convey his thoughts quietly, if firmly, to those who are giving him cause for concern. That he made his remarks publicly yesterday, at a conference on the bug, was destined to cause fear far beyond the Square Mile.

The public is already nervous of the possible effects of the bug and will inevitably be more so when it hears the reasonable Mr Foot warning that unnamed, but well known, institutions may be unnable to cope.

People are already beginning to stock pile food. In anticipation of huge demand, supermarkets are already taking on additional warehouse space to accommodate the extra rations that they anticipate they will be able to sell in the run up to the end of the year. Banks have been fearful of the same attitudes being translated into a run on cash.

They have pondered whether it would be wise to write to customers assuring them that there is no need to fear, their money will be safe as the centuries change. Yet that sort of comfort letter can have exactly the opposite effect to that intended, alerting customers to a potential risk that they had not previously taken seriously.

Mr Foot's words cannot be dismissed. British banks have been patting themselves on the back for assimilating the new currency with barely a hitch. But sophisticated banking businesses deal in foreign currencies all the time and should have been able to cope with the advent of a new one. The problems posed by the bug are different and deeper-seated. And the growth in the financial services industry means that there are many companies now looking after people's savings which are relatively young and unsophisticated. They may need more than dire warnings from Mr Foot to deal with the problems. Even for those banks that have their own house in order, there is a high risk that counterparties will not be ready to play properly when the new year dawns. The next edict from Mr Foot will surely be to cancel Christmas for bankers.

Kingfisher blue? No, thanks to Mulcahy

Is it a bird? Is it a plane? No, it's a retailer. Ten years after changing its name to Kingfisher, the stores group is still striving to find a neat explanation for itself. Yesterday, it opted for "the European home and family retailer", which should result in a visit from the trading standards officer, since homes and families are not available from any of the group's 2,742 outlets.

Kingfisher remains a collection of largely unrelated businesses, ranging from Europe's biggest DIY company to the recently acquired Electric City, which has seven stores in Singapore and is suffering from a consumer power cut.

Together, they have enabled Sir Geoffrey Mulcahy to deliver a remarkable set of figures. To squeeze profits growth of more than 15 per cent out of retailing in these tightfisted times is an achievement that few of his rivals will equal. It even excuses him for announcing that Kingfisher's ambition is to "deliver an unbeatable shopping experience based on outstanding value, choice and service". Well, perhaps in China, where it will open in June, a visit to B&Q really will amount to an unbeatable shopping experience.

The international expansion is remarkable. Kingfisher is now a truly European operator and stretching further afield. Yet the operating businesses remain seperate. Now, with Big W, there is to be an attempt to find some synergy across the group. The experimental store, on the edge of Edinburgh, will incorporate merchandise from the various chains, ranging from Comet's electrical goods to Superdrug's specialities. It may end up recalling the bazaar heritage of the original Woolworth.

But apart from the single experimental Big W, there is but one element that links the various Kingfisher businesses. It is Sir Geoff himself. The phenomenally hands-on chief executive has led the group through its difficult times and proved that his board was right to back him in the power struggle with Alan Smith in 1995. Mr Smith's achievements as chairman of Storehouse are no match for Mulcahy.

Yet at some stage even Sir Geoff may feel the need to quit his Marylebone office. Who would succeed him is a mystery. Roger Holmes, the former finance director of B&Q, who is now running Woolworth is said to be making an impression. He hails from Sir Geoff's favourite consulting firm, McKinsey, as did former Kingfisher finance director, Archie Norman, of Asda.

Sir Geoff and Archie still talk. Do not rule out a deal between them. That would enable Archie to move on and Sir Geoff to solve his succession problem with Asda's Allan Leighton.

Hammering home the point at Wickes

While B&Q has been venturing into far-flung places, its rival Wickes has been concentrating on the home market. Earlier this month, it reported a profit of almost £25 million for last year, a distinct home improvement on the previous year's glaring red figures.

Bill Grimsey has rebuilt the business after the extraordinary accounting scandal that threatened the collapse of the company two-and-a-half years ago. It is now strong enough to be planning to spend £48 million this year on refurbishing existing stores and adding a few new ones.

But while Mr Grimsey is looking to the future, there are still some who are looking to the past. In particular, the Serious Fraud Office, which has been investigating what went on in the company to allow reported profits to be just an illusion.

The complicated double accounting systems that were operated within the company, with the help of stacks of their suppliers, took teams of forensic accountants to dissect. As the process went on, the former chairman, Henry Sweetbaum, and one-time finance director Trefor Llewellyn, were prevailed upon to repay substantial bonuses that the inflated profit figures had generated for them.

There may be more cash to flow back into Wickes's coffers as a few other bonuses have, apparently, still to be reclaimed from non-deservers. And the SFO has not given up on the idea of nailing the culprits in this DIY case. It could a long trial.

Bigger the better

JOHN MONKS would like to see fewer trade unions. Instead, he would like bigger, more powerful ones. The thought will not thrill those in business who fear the consequences of the imminent legislation that will enshrine the right to trade union recognition. But Mr Monks's message is as relevant to those on the other side of the business equation as to the unions. There are far too many organisations representing business interests, and collecting chunky subscriptions. The time is right for rationalisation among these as well as the unions.

Setback for Premier Farnell

By Paul Armstrong

PREMIER FARNELL, the electronics distributor, warned its long-suffering shareholders yesterday that market conditions would not improve this year and that a significant turnround in profit was up to three years away.

John Hirst, chief executive, made the frank assessment of Premier's plight after revealing that pre-tax profits fell 28 per cent to £100.4 million in the year to January 31.

The figures included net exceptional losses of £10 million stemming mainly from expenditure on computer systems which do not meet the company's demands.

The result was widely expected and Premier shares lost just 2p to 192p. But the stock has been more than halved in the past year.

Mr Hirst said Premier had "stabilised" its US operations towards the end of the year after a poor performance in the first half.

This was blamed on the decision in 1997 to sell products for no less than the published prices, ending negotiations with customers.

But he said some flexibility had been reintroduced and sales were recovering.

Premier's profit was also damaged by the impact of the strong pound on many of its industrial customers.

Mr Hirst said it would take until 2001 for the company to recover the £15 million a year it was investing in marketing and other measures designed to lift sales.

Premier has also allowed £25 million to integrate its systems after a period of poor technology planning and a further £20 million to upgrade logistics and service capability.

"There are few business turnrounds that have very sharp corners," Mr Hirst said. "This year we will start to see small signs of improvement but we are talking two or three years for a significant turnround."

A final dividend of 5p was declared, making 9p for the year, compared with 12.9p previously.

M-R Group in takeover discussions

By Chris Ayres

M-R GROUP, the data storage and retrieval group formerly called Microfilm Reprographics, yesterday admitted it was in takeover talks, thought to be with a large outsourcing group.

The company — which has undergone a restructuring to move away from microfilm and microfiche and concentrate instead on managing high-tech electronic databases — said talks were "at an early stage".

M-R Group, headed by Colin Haylock, has won a number of contracts from telephone companies, such as Vodafone, and Cable & Wireless, which need to maintain large databases of customer information.

Analysts yesterday speculated that the offer could have come from a US outsourcing company wanting to get into the lucrative British data storage market. Shares of M-R Group rose 20p yesterday to 138p, up from year low of 85½p.

Breweries sale hard to Swallow

By Dominic Walsh

THE sale of Swallow Group's Vaux Breweries arm to a management buyout team was on the verge of collapse last night after negotiations between the two sides reached an impasse.

Alchemy Partners, the MBO team's venture capital backers, and the Swallow sale committee are believed to have fallen out over several issues, notably that of beer supply agreements.

Negotiations were not helped by the sacking last month of Martin Grant, the group's chief executive, and Neal Gossage, the finance director, after they secretly put forward an alternative proposal to investors. The two men were unhappy that Frank Nicholson, the head of the MBO team, is brother to Sir Paul Nicholson, the Swallow chairman.

The deal's collapse is likely to force Swallow to close its two breweries and retain the bulk of the 350 pubs involved.

Swallow shares fell 7p 274p.

Third profits warning squeezes Devro shares

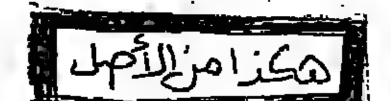
By Fraser Nelson

DEVRO shares fell a further 40p to 143½p yesterday after the world's largest sausage-skin maker issued its third profits warning (Fraser Nelson writes).

The company, whose shares peaked at 545p last year, blamed a sharp decline in demand for sausages in Russia, Eastern Europe and the Far East, whose emerging markets have been blighted by economic crisis. This had caused a fall in orders for finished sausages from Devro's US factories.

Pre-tax profits fell to £36.1 million (£58 million) for 1998 — slightly below the level indicated at its November warning. Earnings were 14.4p (23.6p) per share; the dividend is held at 9.5p. Analysts marked down full-year estimates to £33 million (£39 million).

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STOCK MARKET  MICHAEL CLARK

Investors cautious as witching hour nears

JUST when investors thought the stock market was the safest place to invest their money, along comes a warning telling them to steer clear.

NatWest Stockbrokers is telling clients that the advent of the so-called "double witching" hour in London tomorrow, marking the expiry of the FTSE 100 index futures and the index options, with "triple witching" in the US to follow later in the day, could wreak havoc with their portfolios.

Richard Hunter, head trader at NatWest, says the witching hour is characterised by high levels of trading activity and unpredictable price movements. His advice for clients who have to trade is to use a price limit on their transactions and monitor the spread and volatility of the stock they wish to trade in.

The best advice, he adds, is to stand back altogether.

Opening losses on Wall Street after its record-breaking run earlier this week, which saw it breach the 10,000 level, rounded off a depressing session in London yesterday.

Profit-taking saw prices lose ground from the outset although they closed above their worst levels. The FTSE 100 index finished 61.3 down at 6,140.6, while the FTSE 250 index shed 34.4 at 5,485.3. The total number of shares traded just topped the billion mark.

Allied Domecq retreated 14½p to 468p ahead of a presentation for brokers and fund managers arranged by Warburg Dillon Read, the broker.

Bass was a notable faller among the top 100 companies, losing 29½p at 902½p. The Czech equivalent of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission has allowed Pilsner Urquell and Radegast breweries to merge. Both are already owned by Nomura, the Japanese securities house, which also happens to be Britain's largest pub chain owner. The merger will pose a big threat to Bass's own Czech brewing arm.

Shares of **Litho Supplies** shot up 16½p to 135p yesterday on news that the management is poised to stage a buyout at the 145p level. This is presumably the same management that issued a profits warning back in December. It also said that the difficult trading conditions were set to continue. The price has collapsed from a peak of 232½p last April.

There was some useful turnover recorded in **Staveley Industries**, ½p firmer at 73½p as 202,112 shares were traded in a thin market. Sir Ron Brierley, the New Zealand financier, continues to hold a 15.8 per cent stake through his Guinness Peat Group and hopes are high he may launch a bid for the outstanding shares.

City speculators are convinced that another round of consolidation will take off soon in the chemical sector. **Albright & Wilson**, 2p better at 150p, has just received a bid from Rhodia, the French group, to counter an earlier one from Albemarle of the US. But other deals appear to be in the pipeline. **Brent International**, 1½p easier at 105p, has seen its price rally strongly from a low of 71p in December. **Scapa Group**, 1½p lighter at 113½p, is also seen as vulnerable, having fallen from a peak of 220½p last year.

Oliver Group firmed 1p to 14½p on talk of a bid from rival Stead & Simpson. Oliver has seen its price drop from a peak of 28½p last year.

Sir Colin Chandler, chairman of **Vickers**, has taken advantage of the recent weakness in the share price to add to his holding. He has picked up 10,000 shares at 149p, stretching his holding to 86,928. The price fell 3½p to 145½p.

There was a warm response to final results from **DCS Group**, up 24p at 692½p. Profits grew from £4.9 million to £7.5 million and the IT group, headed by Tim Robinson, chief executive, is bullish about prospects.

Shares of **Full Circle Industries** were suspended at 1¼p pending clarification of its financial position. **Revelation Piccadilly** was also suspended at 1¼p pending clarification of its financial position.

AIM-listed **Voss Net** jumped 17½p to 112½p. The company says it knows of no reason for the rise. **Internet Technology** fell 5p to 150p as Oliver Vaughan, a non-executive director, continued to unload shares. He has now sold 20,000 shares at 152p, in addition to the 30,000 he disposed of earlier this week.

Prestwick Holdings fell 3p to 14½p. It says it has not received any bid approaches and continues to generate operating losses.

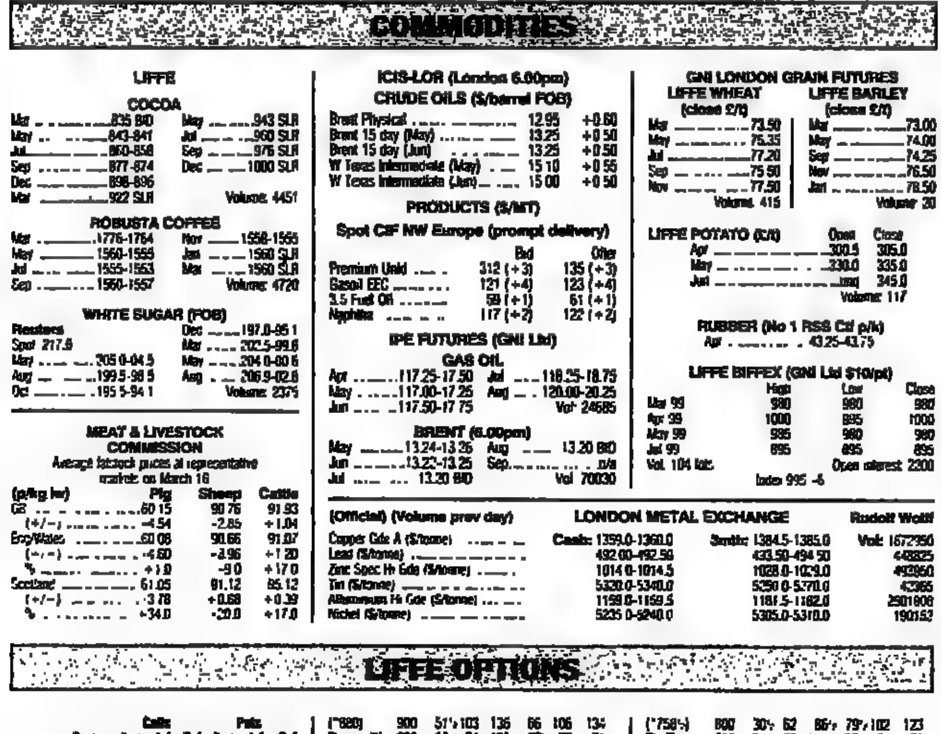
☐ **GILT-EDGED:** Bond prices saw gains stretched to more than £1 after taking their lead from a late rally by US treasury bonds overnight. The drop in the average earnings numbers boosted sentiment and the publication of the minutes of the last Monetary Policy Committee showed that the door had not been closed on further rate cuts.

In the futures pit, the June series of the long gilt rose 46p to £117.68 as a total of 29,000 contracts were completed. Among conventional issues, benchmark Treasury 8 per cent 2021 put on £1.18 at £148.16; in shorts Treasury 7 per cent 2002 was 20p dearer at £106.80.

☐ **NEW YORK:** Shares were lower in the morning session with traders nervous of another assault on the 10,000 level. By midday the Dow Jones industrial average was down 50.23 at 9,880.24.



Jonathan Lees, left, DCS finance director, and Tim Robinson saw the firm's shares surge after announcing better profits



MANCHESTER United scored an own goal with the shares falling 21p to 219p. It follows an unconfirmed report that the Monopolies and Mergers Commission has blocked its proposed takeover by BSkyB, 40 per cent owned by News International, owner of *The Times*, as being against the public interest.

Word is that the MMC is worried that the Premiership club would be able to tip-off the satellite broadcaster whenever a bigger offer emerged for the Premier League's television rights. Other football clubs saw their share prices suffer as a result of the speculation. Aston Villa fell 17½p to 540p, Heart of Midlothian 2p to 65½p, Leeds Sporting 2¼p to 21½p, Leicester City 1½p to 40p, Newcastle United 5p to 90p, Tottenham Hotspur 3p to 83p and Sunderland 2½p to 575p.

Stephen Byers, Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, has now received the MMC report and must reach a decision over the next couple of weeks.

MAJOR INDICES

New York (midday):	
Dow Jones	9890.24 (-40.28)
S&P Composite	1294.41 (-11.97)
Tokyo:	
Nikkei Average	16268.11 (+195.29)
Hong Kong:	
Hang Seng	10946.07 (+28.82)
Amsterdam:	
AEX Index	539.97 (-0.67)
Sydney:	
AO	2977.8 (-14.4)
Frankfurt:	
DAX	5077.34 (-17.20)
Singapore:	
Straits	1470.16 (-19.38)
Brussels:	
BEL20	3342.52 (-5.72)
Paris:	
CAC-40	4170.01 (-16.34)
Zurich:	
SMI Index	7231.8 (+12.9)
London:	
FT 30	3724.5 (-53.5)
FTSE 100	6140.6 (-61.3)
FTSE 250	5485.3 (-34.4)
FTSE 350	2928.9 (-27.6)
FTSE Eurotop 100	2888.87 (-19.10)
FTSE All-Share	2836.90 (-25.41)
FTSE Non Financials	2859.67 (-18.45)
FTSE Fixed Interest	154.89 (+0.65)
FTSE Govt Secs	116.19 (+0.47)
Bargains	88260
SEAQ Volume	1030.4m
US$	1.6297 (+0.0055)
Euro	0.6755 (+0.0040)
£:SDR	n/a
Exchange Index	102.4 (-0.4)
Bank of England official close (4pm)	
RPI	163.4 Jan (2.4%) Jan 1987 = 100
RPIX	161.8 Jan (2.6%) Jan 1987 = 100

RECENT ISSUES

Axon Group	271½	-20
Enhanced Zero Trust	99¾	...
Gander Properties	7½	+¼
Gartmore High Cnv Pr	106½	+¼
Gartmore High Income	103½	+1
Govett Enhanced Dv Pf	101½	...
Govett Enhanced Inc	95½	...
Jupiter En Zero Dv Pf	106¼	+¼
Jupiter Enhanced Inc	100	...
Luminar Warrants	250	...
NBA Quantum	110	...
Sports Internet	121½	-11
Synstar	133½	-3½

RIGHTS ISSUES

First Tech Cnv Prf n/p (320)	16	+1
Oxford Biomedica n/p (15)	8½	-½
Waste Recycling n/p (406)	96½	+7½

MAJOR CHANGES

RISES:

Stock	Close	Chng	Chng%
Reunion Mng	93½	+20	+27.2
MR Group	138	+20½	+17.4
Scotia	101	+13	+14.7
KBC Adv Tech	233½	+27½	+13.3
Biocomps Intl	96½	+10	+11.5
AFA Systems	101½	+10	+10.9
Ramsdens (H)	145	+12½	+9.4
Telspec	129½	+11	+9.2
Kelsey Ind	337½	+27½	+8.8
Eidos	1672½	+132½	+8.6
Grainger	360	+27½	+8.2
Zergo	847½	+62½	+7.9
ML Laboratories	136½	+10	+7.9
De Beers	1096½	+71½	+7.0
Eldridge P A	218½	+13½	+6.5
Ang Am	2200	+121½	+5.8
Fairey Group	332½	+16½	+5.2
Development Sec	228½	+11	+5.0
Energis	1552½	+67½	+4.5
ICI	572	+23½	+4.2
Estates Agency	487½	+20	+4.2
Cattles	761	+31	+4.2

FALLS:

Stock	Close	Chng	Chng%
Devro	143½	-40	-21.7
Smiths Ind	953	-106½	-10.0
Norbain	240	-25	-9.4
Man Utd	219	-21	-8.7
All Nippon Air	182	-14½	-7.3
Vanguard	222½	-17½	-7.2
Axon Group	271½	-20	-6.8
Pace Micro	159	-11	-6.4
TI	423¾	-29¼	-6.4
Andrews Sykes	155	-10	-6.0

TEMPUS

Military manoeuvres

DESPITE reporting an 11 per cent rise in interim pre-tax profits yesterday, the Jeremiahs dominated talk over the future of Smiths Industries. Smiths shares were the worst-performing of the FTSE 100 yesterday, shedding more than £1, and more than 10 per cent, on the day. Part of the cause was straightforward profit-taking. The stock has had an exceptional run: before yesterday the shares had risen 72 per cent since October.

But the outlook for the US aerospace industry is worrying observers. Smiths boasted that earnings from aerospace sales had jumped 42 per cent and that the division now accounts for 37 per cent of its operating profits. But civil jet production, which has fuelled the growth, is set to fall sharply.

Smiths, not entirely convincingly, argues that military orders will replace the civil slowdown. It will have to, for Smiths medical systems and industrial products divisions are unlikely to provide the sort of growth needed to compensate for fewer civil jets being made.

Yet while legitimate short-term concerns circulate, Smiths' longer-term prospects remain bright. Its management is strong, it has an impressive record on acquisitions, and it possesses the firepower to continue buying. Interest cover sits at 30 times and good opportunities remain in developing medical gadgetry, albeit at racy prices.

At 953p, Smiths shares traded yesterday on a prospective earnings multiple of about 18. That is no bargain and the stock may get stuck in a holding pattern until confidence in its main aerospace markets returns. But current price weakness gives a chance to buy the stock which is well worth holding for the long term.

Devro

SINCE Devro's directors sold shares in March last year at 488p, investors in this sausage skin manufacturer have endured a quite shocking price plunge. The price closed down another 22 per cent on the day yesterday.

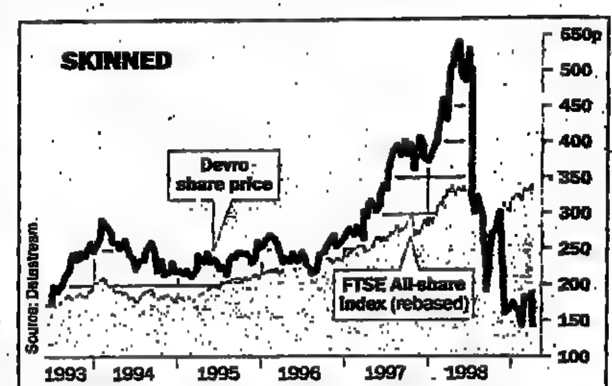
Getting Devro back on its feet presents a tough task, requiring expert leadership. So far, however, Devro's directors have proved themselves more adept at enjoying and benefiting from the upside than managing crisis and reformation.

For so much of its life Devro, floated at 170p in 1993, was hailed as a safety stock. Its collagen and cellulose product used for sausage skins was meant to be immune from normal fluctuations in food prices. The quality of Devro's factories was supposed to make it the slickest producer. Moreover, the construction cost of those installations put up barriers of entry to potential competitors, and protected Devro's profit margins.

Now, the story has changed. Now it is all about dire Russian and South-East Asian markets, about profits warnings and job losses.

Devro has embarked on a reorganisation programme but details remain sketchy. Investors are assured that the good times will return but heavy asset writedowns and redundancy charges seem inevitable. And since Devro has always paraded itself as an efficient producer, questions must be raised about where genuine and sustainable cost savings will come from.

Keep selling.



Hepworth

HEPWORTH remains a grim old company, despite the laudable exertions of Jean-François Chêne, chief executive of Hepworth since 1997.

In the context of the building materials industry, which in many ways is the archetypal uphill battle, yesterday was one of Hepworth's better days. The stock market magnanimously ignored worries about trading to mark the shares up 4 per cent. Behind the optimism was the apparent proof in the annual results that M Chêne's cost-cutting crusade is working. Not only does Hepworth look a much leaner beast, it also seems likely that it will become leaner still.

But the harsh realities of building materials means there is no realistic hope that the market will grow — in the UK or developed parts of Europe at least. Moreover, building materials companies such as Hepworth have precious little power over prices. Competition is too keen and capacity too high.

Hepworth has disappointed enough in the past to put investors off for ever. From here it makes sense as an investment if costs are continually cut, and if Hepworth acquires. Consolidation of developed markets must come. Developing markets exposure would present exciting, if dangerous, growth opportunities. Or Hepworth could be bid for. At best, hold.

Chelsea Village

SHARES in Chelsea Village, owner of the West London football team, lost 6½ per cent of their value yesterday. Evaporating bid hopes hit the whole football sector, as unconfirmed reports circulated that BSkyB's purchase of Manchester United was about to be blocked.

With Ken Bates, Chelsea chairman, still exerting vice-like control over the company a bid was always an outside bet. But interim results from Chelsea added ammunition to its doubters.

Although the figures were more informative than in the past about where the company generates its turnover, no segmental profits detail was given. But at a rough guess the travel agency Chelsea owns made a loss. The new hotel is unlikely to have turned in a profit, not least because it had a nasty falling out with the general manager. It would appear that the footballing activities did make some money in the period; although probably only because Brian Laudrup, a superstar with a salary to match, walked out at the beginning of the season saving the club from forking out for his wages.

Fans of the Blues will want to hold these shares for sentimental reasons. Harder-headed investors should avoid them.

EDITED BY ROBERT COLE

COMMODITIES

LIFFE

COCOA

Mar	835 BID	May	943 SLR
May	843-841	Jul	960 SLR
Jul	860-858	Sep	976 SLR
Sep	877-874	Dec	1000 SLR
Dec	898-896		
Mar	922 SLR		Volume: 4451

ROBUSTA COFFEE

Mar	1776-1764	Nov	1558-1555
May	1560-1555	Jan	1560 SLR
Jul	1555-1553	Mar	1560 SLR
Sep	1560-1557		Volume: 4720

WHITE SUGAR (FOB)

Reuters		Dec	197.0-95.1
Spot 217.8		Mar	202.5-99.6
May	205.0-04.5	May	204.0-00.6
Aug	199.5-98.5	Aug	206.9-02.6
Oct	195.5-94.1		Volume: 2375

MEAT & LIVESTOCK COMMISSION

Average fatstock prices at representative markets on March 16

(p/kg lw)	Pig	Sheep	Cattle
GB	60.15	90.76	91.93
(+/-)	-4.54	-2.85	+1.04
Eng/Wales	60.08	90.66	91.07
(+/-)	-4.60	-3.96	+1.20
%	+1.0	-9.0	+17.0
Scotland	61.05	81.12	85.12
(+/-)	-3.78	+0.68	+0.39
%	-34.0	-20.0	+17.0

ICIS-LOR (London 6.00pm)

CRUDE OILS ($/barrel FOB)

Brent Physical	12.95	+0.60
Brent 15 day (May)	13.25	+0.50
Brent 15 day (Jun)	13.25	+0.50
W Texas Intermediate (May)	15.10	+0.55
W Texas Intermediate (Jun)	15.00	+0.50

PRODUCTS ($/MT)

Spot CIF NW Europe (prompt delivery)

	Bid	Offer
Premium Unld	312 (+3)	135 (+3)
Gasoil EEC	121 (+4)	123 (+4)
3.5 Fuel Oil	59 (+1)	61 (+1)
Naphtha	117 (+2)	122 (+2)

IPE FUTURES (GNI Ltd)

GAS OIL

Apr	117.25-17.50	Jul	118.25-18.75
May	117.00-17.25	Aug	120.00-20.25
Jun	117.50-17.75		Vol: 24685

BRENT (6.00pm)

May	13.24-13.26	Aug	13.20 BID
Jun	13.22-13.25	Sep	n/a
Jul	13.20 BID		Vol 70030

GNI LONDON GRAIN FUTURES

LIFFE WHEAT (close £/t)		LIFFE BARLEY (close £/t)	
Mar	73.50	Mar	73.00
May	75.35	May	74.00
Jul	77.20	Sep	74.25
Sep	75.50	Nov	76.50
Nov	77.50	Jan	78.50
	Volume: 415		Volume: 30

LIFFE POTATO (£/t)

	Open	Close
Apr	300.5	305.0
May	330.0	335.0
Jun	[illegible]	345.0
		Volume: 117

RUBBER (No 1 RSS Cif p/k)

Apr 43.25-43.75

LIFFE BIFFEX (GNI Ltd $10/pt)

	High	Low	Close
Mar 99	980	980	980
Apr 99	1000	895	1000
May 99	995	980	980
Jul 99	895	895	895
Vol: 104 lots		Open interest: 2200	

Index 995 -5

(Official) (Volume prev day)	LONDON METAL EXCHANGE Cash	3mth	Rudolf Wolff Vol
Copper Gde A ($/tonne)	1359.0-1360.0	1384.5-1385.0	1672950
Lead ($/tonne)	492.00-492.50	493.50-494.50	448825
Zinc Spec Hi Gde ($/tonne)	1014.0-1014.5	1028.0-1029.0	492950
Tin ($/tonne)	5320.0-5340.0	5350.0-5370.0	42365
Aluminium Hi Gde ($/tonne)	1159.0-1159.5	1181.5-1182.0	2501906
Nickel ($/tonne)	5235.0-5240.0	5305.0-5310.0	190152

LIFFE OPTIONS

[illegible]

LONDON FINANCIAL FUTURES

	Period	Open	High	Low	Sett	Vol	Open Int
Long Gilt	Mar 99	116.75	117.30	116.66	117.11	617	6596
	Jun 99	117.35	118.03	117.20	117.68	40536	75659
5-Year Gilt	Mar 99				108.68	0	63
	Jun 99				108.41	0	0
Italian Govt Bond	Jun 99	113.26	113.84	113.26	113.63	11479	36787
Japanese Govt Bond	Jun 99	131.45	132.00	131.20			2494
	Sep 99						0
3-Mth Sterling	Mar 99	94.580	94.590	94.570	94.580	15632	150363
	Jun 99	94.830	94.880	94.790	94.865	48307	170385
	Sep 99	94.900	94.960	94.860	94.945	46162	182302
3-Mth Euribor	Jun 99	97.105	97.125	97.100	97.110	34477	175786
	Sep 99	97.120	97.150	97.120	97.135	28945	144183
	Dec 99	96.900	96.910	96.885	96.900	6495	93686
	Mar 00	97.040	97.055	97.025	97.035	10498	78272
	Jun 00	96.955	96.975	96.935	96.955	8433	47273
3-Mth Euroswiss	Jun 99	98.610	98.650	98.610	98.640	10699	76399
	Sep 99	98.490	98.520	98.490	98.520	3431	41842
3-Mth Euro Libor	Jun 99	97.105	97.120	97.105	97.110	464	106492
	Sep 99	97.135	97.140	97.135	97.135	598	93101
	Dec 99	96.890	96.890	96.885	96.900	49	83500
	Mar 00	97.040	97.040	97.040	97.035	25	84309
	Jun 00	96.955	96.955	96.950	96.955	46	63904
FTSE 100	Mar 99	6177.0	6184.0	6105.0	6135.0	62479	123498
	Jun 99	6225.0	6228.0	6150.0	6176.0	55061	91056

MONEY RATES

Base Rates: Clearing Banks 5½ Finance House 6

Discount Market Loans: O/night high: 5½ Low 5 Week fixed: 5¼

Treasury Bills (Dis): Buy 2 mth 5¼; 3 mth 5. Sell: 2 mth 5. 3 mth 4⅞

	1 mth	2 mth	3 mth	6 mth	12 mth
Prime Bank Bills (Dis):	5-5⅛	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	
Sterling Money Rates:	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Interbank:	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Overnight: open 5⅛, close 4½					
Local Authority Deps:	[illegible]	n/a	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Sterling CDs:	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Dollar CDs:	4.84	n/a	4.89	4.97	5.20
Building Society CDs:	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

EUROPEAN MONEY DEPOSITS

Currency	1 mth	3 mth	6 mth	12 mth	Call
Dollar:	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	5-4
Sterling:	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Euro:	[illegible]	[illegible]	3-2¾	[illegible]	3ds-3pr
Yen:	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	1-par
Canada:	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

GOLD/PRECIOUS METALS & COINS

Bullion: Open: $283.70-284.00 Close: $283.90-284.40 High: $284.70-285.20 Low: $283.60-284.10 AM: $283.90 PM: $284.70

Krugerrand: $285.00-287.00 (£174.00-176.00)

Platinum: $367.75 (£225.78) Silver: $5.015 (£3.065) Palladium: $348.00 (£213.90)

STERLING SPOT AND FORWARD RATES

Mkt Rates for March 17	Range	Close	1 month	3 Month
Copenhagen	10.994-11.032	10.994-11.005	[illegible]	[illegible]
Euro	1.4793-1.4813	1.4795-1.4811	0.12-0.15ds	0.37-0.41ds
Montreal	2.4748-2.4849	2.4759-2.4789	0.14-0.07pr	0.27-0.14pr
New York	1.6246-1.6300	1.6291-1.6300	0.08-0.06pr	0.16-0.13pr
Oslo	12.620-12.690	12.620-12.637	[illegible]	[illegible]
Stockholm	13.283-13.343	13.283-13.306	[illegible]	[illegible]
Tokyo	192.85-193.28	192.85-193.06	[illegible]	[illegible]
Zurich	2.3637-2.3728	2.3637-2.3666	[illegible]	[illegible]

Source: Extel Premium = pr Discount = ds

DOLLAR RATES

Australia	1.5943-1.5956
Canada	1.5200-1.5210
Denmark	6.7650-6.7700
Euro	0.9102-0.9110
Hong Kong	7.7495-7.7500
Japan	118.59-118.69
Malaysia	3.7998-3.8002
Norway	7.7770-7.7830
Singapore	1.7238-1.7248
Sweden	8.1700-8.1800
Switzerland	1.4542-1.4552

OTHER STERLING

Argentina peso*	1.6270-1.6380
Australia dollar	2.5953-2.5982
Bahrain dinar	0.6060-0.6200
Brazil real*	3.0590-3.0690
Cyprus pound	0.8460-0.8658
Euro	1.4831-1.4832
Finland markka	8.7373-8.8847
Greece drachma	470.50-481.46
Hong Kong dollar	12.6146-12.6193
India rupee	68.19-69.77
Indonesia rupiah	14341.0-14941.0
Kuwait dinar KD	0.4895-0.5009
Malaysia ringgit	6.1853-6.1879
New Zealand dollar	3.0880-3.0929
Pakistan rupee	78.45 Buy
Saudi Arabia riyal	5.8525-5.9883
Singapore dollar	2.8056-2.8090
S Africa rand	10.0730-10.3044
U A E dirham	5.9050-6.0420

Barclays Treasury * Lloyds Bank

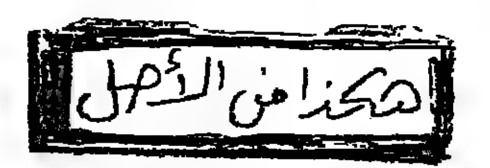
TRADED OPTIONS VOLUMES

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WALL STREET

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هكذا من الأصل



Blair's chance to reform EU budget

Jacques Santer's European Commission may have been a disaster. The timing of its demise was great. Much of the way the EU operates and what it *should* do are up for grabs anyway as part of a package called Agenda 2000, which aims to keep the EU manageable when it enlarges to the East, supposedly in 2002.

Alongside the affluent burghers of Brussels would be the aspiring escapees from Communism in Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Estonia and Slovenia, a rare vision that unites europhiles and europhobes. Together, the newcomers add up to a country more populous than France, Italy or the UK but with about a third of the income per head.

In Poland, by far the biggest of the next wave of entrants, about a fifth of families depend on farming for a living, ten times the EU average. Farm support already accounts for about 43 per cent of EU spending, even more than the structural funds used to help to lift up poorer members and regions.

The impact of bringing in the former East Germany can be seen in dole queues round euroland. Averagely affluent Ireland has been getting a net 5 per cent boost to output from the Community. So enlargement is going to cost a packet. Unless, that is, the common agricultural policy is clipped and the powers of members states are sheared, especially the little ones.

The Amsterdam Treaty started watering down members' influence in the Council of Ministers. The number of EU Commissioners and whether every member should have one are to come.

Germany, the current big-hitting, big-paying EU president, set itself to reform the budget before it hands over to newcomer Finland at the end of June. The debate is equally about how much Jacques Santer's successor has to spend and who supplies the funds.

A start was made on spending by cutting support prices under the CAP, although any net cuts depend on compensation, which has yet to be agreed. Then the German plan was hit for six by events. Instead of piping their way round Europe's capitals to sell Agenda 2000, German ministers are trying to arrange a new EU government.

Member states were already suspicious enough to limit EU spending to 1.27 per cent of output. After the latest revelations, few will volunteer more. Germany and The Netherlands, which contribute a far higher proportion of national income than anyone else, want cuts. Yet resigning Commissioners claimed that things had gone wrong because they were asked to do too much with too little.

Agenda 2000 says the EU should just be able to manage if growth is high enough. But that may not allow for the impact of the euro and the need to help out poorer regions of euroland through a "Cohesion Fund" if things go wrong there. Deepening the union is as expensive as widening it.



GRAHAM SEARJEANT

One answer is for the EU to do less; to cut the number of programmes it funds. The new lot should have a full-time Commissioner for Subsidiarity, searching out things that could be done by member states if they want to. Richer countries could support their own poorer regions. Another answer is to get incentives right. Usually the EU sets subsidies, but schemes are run locally. Each nation has an incentive to dream up as many projects or citizens as it can, who might fiddle some cash.

Offering aid to poor regions in rich countries was, however, a sop to members who contributed most but got little from the CAP. Britain negotiated its rebate instead. If fringe spending programmes are to be axed, then so must be the present system for funding the EU. Charles Jenkins suggests how in *Paying for an Enlarged European Union*, a pamphlet for the Federal Trust (Kogan Page, £10).

For the tax system to be fair, wealthier nations should expect to pay more per head both absolutely and relatively. But net contributions should be the same for equally wealthy countries. That means France and Italy, which benefit hugely from EU spending, should pay more up front to compensate. In effect, the principle behind the UK rebate should apply to all.

France and Italy are unlikely to agree to this. But Britain is for once in the driving seat. To achieve any worthwhile reform of EU funding, and therefore any large-scale reform of EU spending, the UK would have to give up its rebate.

Even on favourable assumptions, this could raise our contribution by a third. It sounds politically impossible. But this lever gives Tony Blair the chance to push through the much-wider EU reforms he professes to champion and which would alone put Britain "at the heart of Europe".

Control and monitoring of EU spending is top of the agenda and vital for enlargement. But it can only be the start. As apologists rightly point out, EU spending is tiny relative to state or even local government spending. Far bigger and less accountable are the costs that Brussels directives and regulations impose on us. UK consumers spend £2 billion a year extra on water and sewerage, for instance, to fulfil EU prescriptions. And you may have noticed the epidemic of bridge repairs that are slowing goods and people all round the country. Again it ultimately comes from Brussels.

The formation of these directives needs far greater scrutiny from the EU parliament before they are enacted. And that scrutiny is unlikely to add much unless MEPs are part of the elected domestic parliament, in our case the House of Lords perhaps. Most of all, EU rules need to be made more flexible by ensuring that all directives automatically lapse after, say, ten years.

The UK rebate could be the lever for change, but only if Mr Blair is prepared to take a political risk.

OFT wants motorists to drive a hard bargain for a new car

Adam Jones finds out why regulators are taking another look in the showrooms

Everyone knows that disconcerting feeling of overtaking a car on a motorway, only to encounter what appears to be the very same vehicle a few miles down the road. A tingling sense of déjà vu, coupled with a creeping suspicion that things *aren't quite what they seem*.

Yesterday's events in the car industry prompted a similar sensation. The Office of Fair Trading — the agency that is being entrusted with more and more power as the Government becomes more and more militant on consumer issues — decided that UK car buyers are being ripped off.

In Britain, we pay up to 60 per cent more for new cars than in other European Union countries such as Spain and France. The OFT said this is because carmakers and dealers are distorting competition — and not just because of the strong pound. The OFT highlighted the fact that dealers are denied the bulk discounts that could lead to lower prices for consumers.

John Bridgeman, the Director-General of Fair Trading, yesterday referred the matter to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission for a further inquisition. The show of strength by Mr Bridgeman came after a committee of MPs claimed that the OFT was "too feeble" in its existing form to pursue suspected market abuses in the car industry. Clearly Mr Bridgman believes that, even with the expanded powers being handed to him by the Department of Trade and Industry, he does not have enough teeth to hurt the people responsible for this situation.



Arthur Daley epitomised dodgy dealers but pricing practices are proving a bigger threat to their reputation at present

Guilty or not, carmakers and dealers face a further nine months of bureaucratic grind while the MMC conducts its investigation.

But hang on a minute, haven't we seen something like this before? In 1990 the OFT referred the car industry to the MMC over pricing issues. The MMC reported back in 1992. To the fury of consumer lobbyists, it pretty much absolved carmakers of abusing their exclusive relationships with dealers to keep prices artificially high. It did make several recommendations to try to foster more competition. Carmakers were to allow their franchised dealers to sell other brands, subject to a few commonsense limitations.

They were also to let dealers advertise more freely, encroaching on another franchised rival's turf if they so wished, fostering "intra-brand" competition. Dealers were also to be allowed to engage in related business, such as car hire, second-hand car sales or general servicing, without having to fear the disapproval of their most important supplier.

These measures were included in European legislation in 1995 and came into force in 1996. So why is the matter being re-examined by the MMC just three years later?

The OFT says it referred the matter to its more muscular "big brother" for a second time simply because the previous measures did not work. Car dealers are still too much in thrall to the manufacturers. An OFT official said yesterday: "The measures didn't change the balance of power."

Alan Pulham, the director of the National Franchise Dealers' Association, which represents those dealers whose fates are most intimately tied to the carmakers' whims, has an alternative explanation. Yes, the first MMC report led to greater freedom for dealers, he says — but on paper only.

He says franchised dealers, who have about £1 million to £2 million invested in their premises, are too scared to antagonise their supplier by diversifying into other car marques and increasing competition.

He claims that those who are bold enough to make such a suggestion are soon "persuaded" otherwise: "There is still some evidence of coercion."

The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders denies that dealers are leant on, saying the risk of being fined up to 10 per cent of turnover is too great. Volkswagen is the only big name to have been punished for dealer abuse.

However, the OFT found that the bonus systems set up by carmakers to reward dealers are often designed to stop them selling outside their designated area.

The OFT believes that the MMC might be bolder in its findings this time because of the pioneering stance it took on the sale of electrical products. The MMC has banned the use of recommended resale prices (RRPs) — where the manufacturer dictates the high street or showroom price charged by the distributor — for TVs and videos and other white goods. The ban came into force last September. RRPs are also found in the car industry. The MMC, having established a precedent, may bite again, the thinking goes.

A tough MMC investigation will also strengthen the UK's call for the abolition of the block exemption from European competition rules that the car industry's exclusive distribution arrangements currently enjoy. The exemption is due to be reconsidered next year.

Car dealers have certainly changed since the last MMC ruling in 1992. Their anorexic profit margins have led to widespread consolidation. But the relationship is still as symbiotic as ever.

The mass manufacturers are awarding fewer franchises covering larger areas. The increased size of these contracts allows them to continue to be tough with their dealers, who struggle along with pre-tax profit margins of about 1 to 2 per cent.

The trading relationship is getting even closer in some cases. Ford formed a joint venture to buy Dagenham Motors, the biggest dedicated sales channel for its vehicles, for less than £29 million this year.

One argument against a referral to the MMC now is that the UK car buyer will soon benefit from a loosening on the sale of Japanese cars in this country. Japanese imports are limited to just 11 per cent of the total car market at the moment. This constraint will be abolished at the start of next year.

There is also the risk that the car industry, which is already facing big challenges through overcapacity and faltering economic growth, is being swamped with paperwork and compliance requirements.

Since 1990, it has had to comply with an MMC inquiry, a European Commission study and the latest OFT probe. Now it faces more MMC paperwork, yet another round of European Commission submissions before any renewal of the block exemption, plus a related grilling from the Department of Trade and Industry.

The OFT complained yesterday that carmakers and dealers had been slow and uncooperative during the most recent inquiry. If the issue of overpriced cars did not arouse such strong emotions, the public might feel that the industry foot-dragging was justified.

Enterprising attempt to integrate rival software

Over the past ten years, most large corporations have spent tens of millions of pounds installing hugely complex software systems that link all their departments together. These systems are made possible by enterprise resource planning (ERP) software packages, produced by companies such as Germany's SAP and US companies, such as SSA and PeopleSoft.

Indeed, the market for ERP software — which allows companies to automate many of their operations, and perform quick and efficient analysis of all aspects of their businesses — is estimated to be worth £40 billion. However, over the past few months, it has become clear that companies which use ERP software are facing serious challenges.

One problem is the millennium bug. Because ERP software systems can take up to a year to install, and are usually used for more than five years before being replaced, many companies are wary of buying new products before 2000.

This is because companies want to make sure that their software systems can survive the millennium bug before trying to upgrade them. However, with e-commerce catching on, companies risk being left behind by delaying upgrades.

The exploding popularity of e-commerce can lead to other problems: often, ERP software packages cannot be adapted quickly enough to fit new circumstances. This means that a business has to re-engineer the way one of its departments works to get around a relatively simple problem. These issues have affected most users of ERP systems, and the companies that produce ERP software have seen their shares hit hard. However, SSA, one of the industry's smaller players believes it has come up with a way to tackle these problems.

SSA's strategy is to allow its ERP products to work with software packages produced by rivals. The company has also invented a set of software tools that allows software produced by rivals to be "seemlessly integrated" into its own systems. It may seem like an obvious solution, but it is a big step forward for the ERP industry, which has previously prided itself on developing complex proprietary software.



As an SSA spokesman said: "Our interoperable approach will enable companies to get their software systems up and running quickly, and then to modify and extend business processes to gain competitive advantages."

SSA may have had to adopt such a strategy out of financial necessity — its research and development budget is almost cripplingly limited. However, if interoperability becomes standard, it would benefit customers not only of SSA, but of all ERP companies.

☐ EIGHTY-FIVE per cent of company directors believe that e-mail is encouraging the circulation of "inappropriate" and often scandalous material, according to a survey by Integralis, the computer security company, out this week. The survey goes on to say that 15 per cent of directors have had to discipline employees for inappropriate use of the Internet, while 22 per cent of directors have disciplined employees for using e-mail to gossip with friends and colleagues.



☐ COMPANIES from the music, software, film and television industries in Hong Kong staged a demonstration against copyright theft yesterday. The protest, which attracted international movie stars such as Jackie Chan, pictured left, involved closing cinemas, staging an "anti-piracy" march and cancelling music broadcasts. It is estimated that copyright theft costs media companies billions of pounds every year, with the Internet threatening to make the problem worse.

CHRIS AYRES

Hey, Jude

JUDITH MAYHEW, the feisty head of the Corporation of London's Policy and Resources Committee and so the City's chief executive, is in trouble again. Mayhew put her name to Britain in Europe, the new pro-euro pressure group founded by Lord Marshall of Knightsbridge and others at the weekend.

Sharp intake of breath at the Corporation, which is officially neutral given the split of opinion in the City. Mayhew was criticised at last Monday's meeting of her committee and can expect further flak a week today, when the Court of Common Council meets.

She says she put her name to the list of supporters of the new group in a private capacity and that her Corporation title should not have been used. This is felt to be disingenuous, as she would hardly have been asked if she were merely a lawyer at Wilde Sapte, her job in the world outside. "There's a genuine feeling that we would have liked to have been asked first," says a mole close to the committee. So you could say no? "That was, I suppose, the way the question was leading."



Judith Mayhew is in trouble with the Corporation for her pro-European views

ACCOUNTANCY AGE conducts weekly and sometimes useful straw polls of finance directors on issues of the day. Sometimes I fear I got no further than the headline of this week's. "Financial directors unmoved by 'neutral' Budget," it says.

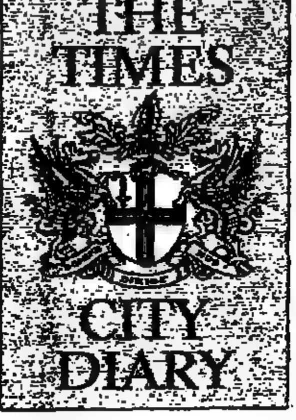
Plane cheeky

A TERRIBLE story reaches me from a good source in Nigeria that should serve as a warning to anyone thinking of doing business there. A 747, I do not know which airline, landed and started to taxi towards the terminal, only to meet a line of planks piled up across the runway.

The plane stopped, and the pilot radioed the control tower. We'll look into it, he was told. Minutes passed in the cockpit, and then someone heared muffled knocking from under the plane. Everyone stayed put.

Then a lorry was seen to emerge from under the belly of the plane and streak off. The aircrew alighted, to find that someone had unscrewed the aircraft's hold and made off with all the luggage.

Moral: keep your possessions close to you, and not in the hold. "You almost have to admire them, don't you?" says my informant.



KINGFISHER'S insistence that it is a European company meant some complex shenanigans for its results briefing yesterday. Sir Geoff Mulcahy was beamed in to the City from a meeting in Paris, where a presentation from Kingfisher and its French DIY partner, Castorama, was taking place.

Translation was provided for those of our analysts not fluent in French. The operation was deemed successful, if a little long-winded. But one of the more sceptical analysts did wonder whether, since Kingfisher never answers questions anyway, this arrangement simply made awkward questions easier to avoid.

Claude cover

WE WOULD think it odd if, ooh, Sir Peter Davis of the Pru were to sit on the boards of the Halifax, Barclays Bank and Lloyds TSB and hold sway over whether the three should be merged into the world's biggest bank. But this is pretty much the situation in France, where one man, Claude Bébéar, will largely decide the fate of the BNP bid for Société Générale and Paribas.

Bébéar sits on the boards of SocGen and Paribas, while his right-hand man at Axa is at BNP. This morning Axa releases results in Paris, and Bébéar will be questioned by his shareholders on just what he thinks he is up to. By my analysis, whatever happens he comes out on top, with Axa's position strengthened at the expense of German rivals.

But Bébéar's manoeuvrings have not made him universally popular in the French financial community because of their impact on the privatisation of a fourth bank, Crédit Lyonnais.

It is imperative that the Finance Ministry knows exactly how many French banks there will be left in due course among which to distribute the core shareholdings of CL and prevent these slipping into foreign hands. Given the above, this is no longer possible.

MARTIN WALLER

city.diary@the-times.co.uk



"We're out of Rawlplugs — have you tried our French branch?"

No time for complacency on tax

JAMES MORGAN

David Cruickshank says business must attempt to influence policy

We are now familiar with the business tax headlines of the Budget: Corporation tax at 30 per cent; a small companies rate of 20 per cent; measures targeted at small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with a 10 per cent tax rate for very small companies from April 2000, an extension of the 40 per cent first-year allowances for SMEs until July 2000 and research and development tax credits for SMEs in the 2000 Budget which would give deductions of 150 per cent of R&D spend with refunds being available to companies that are not paying tax.

No big structural changes to the direct tax system for large companies were proposed. This is good news for most corporates which have been overwhelmed by recent changes to the tax system caused by self-assessment, the new in-year payments on account regime and the abolition of ACT. However, corporates must not assume that it is all over for another year. An active participation in a number of consultative exercises is vital if business is to influence tax policy.

Last year business was disappointed that requests made for in-year payments on account to be based on prior-year profits instead of current-year profits were not heeded. Against this, there have now been notable successes in the direct tax area after consultative exercises: the proposals for a general anti-avoidance rule (GAAR) for corporate direct taxes have been shelved for the time being. Proceeding with this proposal would have resulted in uncertainty on all corporate transactions unless a comprehensive advance clearance mechanism was established and this would have added significantly to costs of doing business.

After the changes to CGT for individuals, there will now be no big changes to the way in which company capital gains are taxed. Tapering relief for companies would have been unnecessarily complex and the removal of indexation relief unfair for many asset-backed companies. There will be further consultation on the rules for international groups, capital losses and gains on the disposal of subsidiaries. Companies should continue to make their views known.

The most welcome of the "new" consultative exercises are on the proposed all-employee share schemes and the proposals to reform the taxation of intellectual property. The proposed share scheme allows employees to deduct for tax and NI purposes up to £1,500 a year for the acquisition of shares in their employer. Employers will be able to give free shares to staff up to a value of £3,000 a year and can provide further free shares on a matching basis if employees buy shares again up to £3,000 a year. After three years, there is a clawback of the income tax relief previously given but the intention is that the growth in the value of the shares during this period should be tax-free. Employers can deduct the employees' salary forgone to purchase shares, the value of any free shares allocated and the set-up costs. No decisions have yet been made about what will happen with existing approved Revenue schemes and this will be subject to consultation. Views are required by April 30, 1999, with legislation proposed for the 2000 Finance Bill.

The need for reform to the taxation of intellectual property is highlighted by the special relief announced in the Budget for the capital cost of acquiring mobile phone licences which would not have attracted tax relief in the UK as the licence is an intangible asset. Significantly the current tax regime in the UK does not allow for tax relief on the acquisition costs of trademarks, brand names, knowhow, etc. In the US relief is available over 15 years. The consultative document, which seeks to define intellectual property (principally by excluding goodwill), asks whether capital allowances or an accounts-based depreciation approach should be used for tax relief and considers whether existing special reliefs (for scientific research and films) should be continued. Views from business are required by July 31, 1999.

The Government wants the review to be broadly revenue-neutral. But what are the long-term costs to the Exchequer of an unsatisfactory reform in this area? As full tax relief is available in some other countries, companies could acquire intangibles through overseas subsidiaries and consequently income flows and associated R&D and enhancement will also (probably) take place in those countries.

The Government should also review its plans to charge stamp duty reserve tax on the issue of foreign currency bearer securities on acquisitions as this will militate against the choice of the UK as the parent company location in cross-border mergers where shares in a UK company are issued.

David Cruickshank is head of tax at Deloitte & Touche.



David Cruickshank urges participation in consultation

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Customs men go crackers

JUST as food additives are supposed to drive children barking mad, it seems that it is simply the mention of any food that ensures that Customs and Excise takes leave of its senses. The latest VAT decision bears this out. In the past there have been arguments about how far you had to take a meat pie away from a pie stall before it became a takeaway item and arguments about whether Jaffa cakes were indeed cakes.

Now it is the turn of the prawn cracker. The VATmen have decided that it depends on its ingredients. If made from tapioca it escapes the tax. But if made from potato or cereal it incurs VAT. "Bizarre" is how the VAT people at Deloitte & Touche have described the decision. It is good to see that those at Customs and Excise have their curious minds focused on the great issues of the day.

Forging ahead

EVERY management book cliché will tell you that the secrets of success are to have everyone singing from the same hymnbook and to hammer your personality on to the leadership culture. So John McCuin should be well-equipped to deal with his new role as managing partner of Shipleys. This weekend he is the tenor soloist in a performance of one of Puccini's great choral works and in two weeks' time will join the inner circle of the Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths.

Stamp duty

AS OUTRAGED practitioners are finding, the Inland Revenue will stop at nothing to devise devious ways to fill the Government's coffers. When it sent out the parcels of press releases that provide the technical back-up for the Budget, it put the equivalent of the postage for one first-class letter on each parcel. No one has yet calculated the amount of "excess postage due" that has been raised as a result.

Lucky for some

NICK LAND, Ernst & Young's artistic senior partner, has passed another milestone. "This is the thirteenth time I've seen the Monet exhibition," he was telling guests at the E&Y-sponsored blockbuster show at the Royal Academy last week. And he prefers it to past shows the firm has sponsored. "After 13 visits to the Cézanne I was really flagging," he said. "But this is wonderful." It also shows that, despite being mired in the firm's strategy, he can still count.

ROBERT BRUCE

Game is up for a once-noble profession

IT HAS been an extraordinary week of rumours. Eminently sane and solid citizens have been calling up and prefacing their remarks with: "It's not April 1, but..."

Rumours of the UK board of Ernst & Young being in emergency session abounded, with a succession of limos dropping off partners at the goods lift at the back of Becket House so they could arrive without raising suspicions.

One minute the theory was that E&Y's UK arm was going to join Arthur Andersen. Then, perhaps, it was their US firm, riled by plans to move the international headquarters from New York to London, which was going to do a bunk. Or maybe it was Canada. And would the rump of the firm throw in its lot with Deloitte & Touche? Or maybe KPMG and Grant Thornton were going to get together.

It all stems from the ambitions of Arthur Andersen. With the rift with Andersen Consulting as permanent as it could be, the firm needs to increase its income and growth. And the avowed policy of its worldwide chief, Jim Wadia, is to build these through poaching chunks of other firms.

So far it has been extremely successful, but *those successes* have been practices and teams outside the mainstream of the accounting world. Now the the firm is aiming to bring off a bigger coup. But the signs are that there is some faltering in the final furlong. Having Andersens out in the market being its usual aggressive self is destabilising the market, and a heightened rumour market is the result.

ROBERT BRUCE

But the real lessons to be drawn are different. What we are seeing are further signs that what used to be known as the accountancy profession has turned into just another service provider. It used to be advertising agencies that provided this sort of mix-and-match fun. They endlessly transmuted from one set of odd initials to another. Creative teams came and went.

Clients were presumed to follow the stars of the business from one firm to another and so keep track of all the circuitous transformations. But really they just stopped caring. Now it is the accounting business. It is no longer a profession. What they are selling is a commodity. They have cut themselves adrift from the old idea that they were people of substance who were there to act as the voice of sanity when companies pushed creative accounting to the margins.

People used to talk of good financial reporting, backed up by strong members of the accounting profession, as being a key to lowering the cost of capital. But the signs now are that the profession has decided that they really are just simply salesmen for a line of products. That is fine.

It is how the consulting arms of the firms have grown. They have never had any doubt about it. Spot a market and pitch into it with a product line.

But the fundamentals of the firms were supposed to provide assurance. They were not supposed to have their heads turned by the ludicrous flights of fancy that the oversized egos of the business world are prone to following.

Small wonder that the reputation of the accounting world is plummeting. Take Warren Buffett, for example. In his annual report to shareholders, which was released this week, Buffett, one of the most influential investment experts in the world, argued that the state of financial reporting had plunged to a new low in America. He blamed the managements of companies.

"Many purposefully work at manipulating numbers and deceiving investors," he said. So where were the auditors, those pillars of probity, who are there for the sole reason of stamping out this sort of thing? Buffett's argument was that auditors simply gave in. And some actively came up with creative accounting scams to sell to clients.

Now that is not new. And it could be argued that this is sour grapes from Buffett after a year of disappointing performance. But financial reporting is supposed to be getting better. And it is not, particularly in America. One person I was talking to earlier this week has been trying to hire a large number of very bright Americans for a particular strand of new business. He had collated some figures on the people he has been interviewing.

Some 60 per cent of their existing remuneration packages were in options. In the US none of such figures goes through the profit-and-loss account. This overstates corporate profits and skews statistics on labour costs. It is generally considered to be a scandal. But the companies bully the hapless audit community.

And no one closes the financial reporting loophole. It is a small but important example of how the old profession of accountancy has given up the ghost. And this week's rumour market tells the same story. The Big Five firms may prefer playing musical chairs to forcing clients to face the music, but the reality is that for most of them it shows the world that the game is up.

BUSINESS CONTINUITY

Eve-Ann Prentice introduces a three-page report on the experts who help companies to cope or even thrive when disaster strikes







From floods at the Welcombe Hotel, above, to the Manchester bombing, right, William Want-Sibley, back left, and his team are ready for action

The troubleshooters

Working life is one disaster after another for William Want-Sibley. He spends his days — and many nights — racing around Britain visiting businesses in the throes of a crisis. He has seen it all: from flood, fire and theft to collapsing buildings and terrorist bombs.

But Mr Want-Sibley is not some sort of catastrophe voyeur. He is a troubleshooter, usually brought in by one of the big insurance companies, to try to keep a stricken business trading or at least to minimise lost working time in the immediate aftermath of a disaster.

While company directors are still reeling from the shock of finding their stockroom under water or their main switchboard turned to ashes, the London businessman and his company, Response 2000, are often already taking control, organising emergency repairs and restoring a semblance of normality. They have the experience to know where to get hold of vital staff and equipment in a hurry.

Response 2000 is not short of work. In the next five years, a fifth of all UK businesses will suffer a disaster, if past figures are anything to go by. And while Mr Want-Sibley and his team may be a godsend after a crisis, it is becoming clear that companies should make plans for dealing with all manner of emergencies long before they happen.

Business continuity management — making sure that the show can go on — can mean limiting the damage of bad publicity, ensuring that there are backups of vital computer files away from business premises, or even deciding how to cope if all the staff succumb to flu.

Small and medium-sized companies may think that they could cope with the unknown, but the truth is that 80 per cent of companies which do not have a crisis plan in place go out of business within 13 months of facing an emergency.

These are the figures compiled by the Business Continuity Institute (BCI), an umbrella group for the profession which provides the only recognised qualification in the field. It has 650 professionals in 19 countries.

"Business continuity management takes an holistic view of an organisation. It's about anticipating what can go wrong and taking appropriate planned and rehearsed steps to maintain critical business processes while the business recovers," says John Sharp, the chief executive of the BCI.

"Unlike disaster planning, business continuity management examines the entire business. Using a technique called Business Impact Analysis, those areas of a business which are most vulnerable are identified. The loss of customer or investor confidence will feature high on the list. In a fast-moving, competitive world, the failure of any company to meet customer expectations or needs is an opportunity for a competitor to move in," he says.

No one can predict or prevent crises such as fire and flood, but the way these emergencies are handled can have a huge impact on company profits. So can failing to foresee public relations opportunities that backfire.

"The Virgin brand is known worldwide and is based on innovative products and service," Mr Sharp says. "The fiasco with the train company running late with Labour Party members and ministers to last year's Blackpool conference has dented this image. Within days the regulator had tightened the penalties on Virgin trains."

The institute also points to the Shell oil company and says it has lost its "You can be sure of Shell" image. "It now has a grimmer image after its perceived involvement with Nigeria's political problems," Mr Sharp says.

The company has full disaster recovery plans in place, the BCI accepts. But Mr Sharp asks: "Do they have business continuity plans that address the wider, softer issues which risk-management fails to consider?"

The cost of implementing a business continuity plan varies enormously, depending on the size and complexity of the company. One firm might need to concentrate on diverting its mail-handling, another on finding alternative accommodation if the worst happens.

Using one of the specialised companies, which can oversee this for your firm, can cost from £10,000 to hundreds of thousands of pounds, according to the BCI.

"A small company might just need to back up its computer files," Mr Sharp says. "Medium companies could combine the role of a business continuity manager with that of risk manager. However, the managers responsible must understand the different approach that business continuity will require."

But even the best plans can go awry, and then it is up to insurers and damage limitation experts such as Response 2000 to move in.

When the Manchester bomb devastated the city centre on June 15, 1996, Aquascutum's shop was among the most badly hit. Floors, walls and ceiling were damaged, while shards of glass had been driven into the fabric of thousands of pounds worth of clothes.

Yet Aquascutum believes that it was the first store to open for business again — within 48 hours of repair work starting. "The bomb went off on the Saturday, but we were not allowed near the site until Wednesday afternoon," says Karen Hepburn, Aquascutum's regional manager.

"Our insurers brought in Response 2000 and we were open for business on Friday morning. They do not know the meaning of 'no'."



Response 2000 had the Aquascutum shop in Manchester open 48 hours after starting bomb repairs

Bomb repair work included a new shopfront, temporary glazing, new floor slabs, suspended ceilings, decorating throughout the shop, stone repairs outside, carpet cleaning, French polishing and alarm repairs. Meanwhile, the ruined stock was taken away and replacement goods brought in.

Less than a year ago, floodwater poured into the Welcombe Hotel and golf course at Stratford-upon-Avon, just as the Easter break was about to start. By the following day, Good Friday, the main kitchen was under two feet of water, guests had been evacuated and management was considering calling in the Army.

Instead, a Response 2000 disaster team arrived and business was under way again within 24 hours. "One wing of the hotel had been badly hit and all furnishings and electrical appliances had to be removed, including sports equipment and sunbeds," Mr Want-Sibley says. "Our special resources enabled us to have 80 dehumidifiers delivered and shared between this site and another claim five miles away. Plant-hire facilities were available 24-hours a day in spite of the bank holiday."

- *Business Continuity Institute: 0870 603 8783.*
- *Response 2000: 0181-886 6566.*



Peter Power explains how companies can set up a survival plan in case of a real catastrophe

How to stand the heat in the kitchen

During a crisis our mental control panels seem to stop working: all the dials go into the red zone, the data become misleading and normal measurements can mean nothing.

Experience has shown that, when suddenly faced with a catastrophe, all of us have a tendency to try to follow familiar references — things such as double-checking diary appointments or making a cup of coffee.

The more disturbing the situation, the stronger the urge to take refuge in familiar procedures. Such routine or familiar tasks are invariably inappropriate in the circumstances, but they can act as a mental circuit breaker to keep us sane in a crisis.

Unable to work with the reality of the unscheduled, the unexpected, the unavoidable, the unimaginable, the unprecedented, the unnecessary or the unbelievable, many senior managers realise too late that their board-level skills have poorly equipped them to deal with sudden crises.

Many emergency plans still provide little more than a spurious comfort factor to senior management and are seldom linked to any real benefits. In general, crises follow a sudden and unexpected shift that disturbs the ordinary course of events. This leads to a state of instability and uncertainty.

The critical juncture may be of two types: either the crisis is the result of factors outside the normal development, or it is the result of the development itself. Once this development passes a certain point, it creates a state of chaos.

I have been involved with a number of tests where the chief executive or MD has been about to fall over when put under pressure. Other executives want to keep going in increasingly bizarre ways. Subordinate staff seem powerless to tell them.

MORE POWER TO YOUR ELBOW

BUSINESSES are being inundated by advice in the helter-skelter dash towards the millennium. So a government decision to produce a pioneering series of guides about management best practice may seem like offering a glass of water to a drowning man.

The publications are, however, intended as a lifebelt and will be published by the Department of Trade and Industry in a drive to help firms to compete more effectively.

The first in the series has been written by Peter Power, who discusses his role in the world of business continuity here.

Mr Power is a member of the judging panel for the annual Business Continuity Planning Awards and managing director of Visor Consultants. *Business Continuity Management — Preventing Chaos in a Crisis* will be posted on the DTI's website, *www.dti.gov.uk/mbp* by the end of this month.

On the other hand, sales managers can sometimes have a higher competence threshold in a catastrophe and may thrive in a crisis.

Following a test or exercise, debriefings can produce statements such as: "Perhaps we only confessed our little faults to persuade people that we did not have larger ones" or "The chief executive was exhausted, the MD was exhausted, all of us were exhausted. I found it comforting that on day one we were so totally unanimous."

Often, when a disaster recovery plan does exist, it has never been tested: these tend to be paper plans only and their thickness and the "confidential" stamp do not ensure that they are relevant.

Any plan should be the result of a continuous process, of which the document marked "plan" is only the written presentation of management competence to be adhered to in the event of a likely crisis.

Plans are seldom linked to any real benefits such as possible insurance premium reductions, reducing the amount of business interruption insurance required or protecting assets.

Other things to consider include:

- Mitigation of exposure to Health & Safety Regulations;
- Improved operational resilience;
- Enhanced team spirit;
- Retention of profits;
- Continued trading ability in a crisis;
- Attractiveness to investors.

In my experience, the worst consequences result when organisations fail to prevent a crisis from getting worse and wake up only when things have deteriorated to the point of disaster.

Although there are exceptions to this, few managers and their employees understand that options exist to train people in business continuity management (BCM) to act with confidence and skill at the initial stages of an incident to stop it spreading.

Very often it is the competency level of an individual and the initial reaction team that determines how good or bad things will become, rather than some irreversible process that forces an organisation to be solely reactive rather than proactive.

Moreover, there is now strong evidence which suggests that a company's recovery of shareholder value immediately following a catastrophic loss is largely independent of insurance cover.

It depends more on high-quality risk management and business continuity systems.

That is not to say insurance cover is unnecessary: it is very important indeed, but it should be seen — similar to recovering information technology systems and databases — only as part of the solution within an effective risk management, or better still, business continuity (BC) process.

There are several variations in building up a BC process. Typically it involves all or some of the following steps: top-level commitment; the initiation of the BCM process; identifying the threats and risks to the organisation; management of the risks and analysing the likely consequences of business failures.

Other points to watch out for are: developing strategies; developing and implementing the written plan to deal with any crisis; testing, exercising and maintaining the plan; and going back to the top every few months to validate the process.

I have encouraged many organisations to ask if their existing plans are "crisis friendly". By that I mean capable of being read in a crisis, perhaps by an employee whose heart is beating faster than normal and who is working in a very odd or even dangerous environment.

Above all else, plans must be designed to inform the reader, not protect the author.

In an age where the unthinkable has become possible and the unlikely commonplace, perhaps the question is not whether a business can afford to implement business continuity management strategies but whether it can afford not to.

SUPERSTOCK



Many executives boil over in a crisis: can you keep a cool head when the heat is on?

Shaken and stirred into action

A recovery company learnt key lessons when its own offices were shattered by a bomb blast

At a restaurant in Walton-on-Thames, Surrey, senior executives were enjoying a drink before a celebratory dinner to mark a successful year for their company when the sales and marketing director burst in.

To disbelieving ears, Mick Williams reported that a bomb had exploded in London's Docklands close to one of the company's main offices. The blast had been devastating but so, too, was the news because the company was in the disaster recovery business and the office affected contained 650 fully equipped desks supported by an independent cable system and telephone exchange for other companies to use in such an emergency.

The executives of SG-RS (Sema Group-Recovery Services) reached for their mobile phones but there was no signal. So they raced to the local office to gather what information they could and start making fresh plans.

"Like my colleagues, the executives of other companies in the bomb zone had yet to hear the news that Friday evening, but it was clear there was chaos all around our building in Harbour Exchange," Mr Williams recalls.

"As the evening wore on, the calls began to come in from our clients. Three of us headed for our office at 7am the next morning but it was Sunday before we could get inside to assess the damage, which was considerable."

John Kersley, the general manager of SG-RS, says: "One of the things proved that night was that the best laid plans can be interrupted. Some of our clients had suffered a disaster but we had one of our own at the same time. We had contracted to look after them in an emergency but we didn't know what to expect ourselves. A few years ago, we would have been in an impossible position but we had grown to a sufficient size to be able to cope."

> 'The overriding lesson was that you need options'

Like other leading business continuity companies, SG-RS had learnt from the two previous IRA bombs targeted at financial institutions in London — at the Baltic Exchange and in Bishopsgate. They recognised that their clients might require more than systems backup and they might need more than one emergency centre.

Although five clients lost premises in the Docklands bombing, all were accommodated by SG-RS: three in a recovery centre at Wapping, East London, and two with manufacturing operations at a specialist centre at Hoddesdon in Hertfordshire. The centres had to be modified to cope with the unexpected load but operated successfully.

The bomb in 1996 claimed two lives and caused millions of pounds in damage, some of which is still being repaired.

"It took 18 months before everything was restored in our centre at Harbour Exchange," Mr Williams says, "but that weekend we briefed all our staff about where to go and what to do on the Sunday. By Monday, our clients were operating normally and their customers didn't know they had suffered a disaster."

Mr Kersley adds: "The overriding lessons for a disaster recovery company which might suffer a disaster itself are that you need options and must not rely, because of the communications problems, on just one or two senior executives."

TONY DAWE

Don't drown — let the bugbusters be your lifeline

Computer loss can lead to the collapse of a firm, reports Chris Ward

In the past 12 months the question of disaster recovery has come to the forefront of every computer manager's mind as the prospect of the biggest threat of all looms large: the year 2000 and the millennium bug.

But because so much attention is concentrated on it, the Y2K problem (as it is called in computing circles) may end up causing disasters beyond its remit as other more mundane problems are ignored.

The good news is that we know, roughly, when it is going to be a problem; only roughly because not all its influence is being saved up for midnight at the end of this year. Systems that need to date things years ahead have already felt its influence. One high-street store found its warehouse computer was rejecting cases of pickled onions. Their physical "best before" date was well into the next century, but the store's warehouse computer thought the "00" at the end of the date meant they were nearly 100 years old.

More mundane problems can happen at any moment. Hard disks can crash, power supplies can fail, keyboard operators can delete the wrong files.

Many information technology managers have already imposed bans on anything other than routine maintenance for fear that what is now a Y2K compliant system will fail if an untested component is installed and upsets the delicate balance of their system.

There are two potential problems with this approach: first, a component may fail through inattention and second, when January 1, 2000 arrives, systems are going to be stressed as some departments try to apply hundreds of software patches and hardware upgrades to systems which have not been touched in months. Ultimately, this becomes a classic conundrum where you will be damned if you do not change and damned if you do.

Y2K apart, the constant daily disaster waiting to happen in any computing department is data loss. Power failure, hardware failure and user stupidity are the usual causes, and all can be guarded against.

The Uninterruptable Power Supply (UPS) has become so refined that it can now guard against loss of external power, save data and close machines down in a way which ensures that they will start up again correctly once power is restored.

They can work even in extreme cases — Liebert Europe installed a system for the directory company Scoot which kept its critical computers working inside a flooded barn, the purpose-built enclosure keeping the waters at bay and the system powered up.

But if power is going to be out for more than a few minutes something more permanent needs to be set up, which is where specialist disaster recovery firms with customer-ready sites can help.

One of the largest of these is Guardian, which has huge standby computing facilities in the country. It can provide alternative workplaces, dealer rooms and data backup.

For the home user it may not matter much if they are without a computer for a few days, but for a firm of stockbrokers it could mean bankruptcy. For small and medium enterprises (SMEs) the sheer cost of maintaining a second site into which they can move their business is probably prohibitive. For such companies, however, a little planning can go a long way.

The key to recovering from disaster is the ability to access data within a sufficiently quick period so that your customers either are not inconvenienced or do not notice. This means having some method of off-site data storage — a location from which, if your premises burn down and everything is destroyed, you can access as much of your data as possible.

Small companies as well as individuals can be well served by the online storage companies. These allow your computers to dial into their backup facilities during the night and upload copies of your sensitive data, which can then be accessed from any computer with a modem, should anything happen. Larger companies will want to employ a data storage company to keep copies of their backup tapes in secure premises, available at short notice.

No matter what your strategy is, the key to it working when it matters is testing - do not wait until it has all gone pear-shaped before working out how on earth you are going to read those disks you have been storing with a data storage firm. It is no use having instant access to the data if it is going to take you three days to install and configure the computer system you need to read it.

L'Oréal, the cosmetics company, uses a system from Synstar Business Continuity to provide a telecoms-based recovery system for its sites. L'Oréal uses the SAP accounts system, and if one of its sites suffers a breakdown which cannot be repaired, a courier brings its latest backup to L'Oréal's Paris headquarters where it is run on an identical piece of hardware. The remote site then accesses the data until the local fault can be repaired.

Again, the key is planning: work out how long you can stand to be without your data, and then put in place a system which can be up and running within that vital period.

- *Liebert: 01628 403200, www.liebert.com, Guardian: 01932 835900, www.guardiandr.co.uk, Synstar: 01344 662929, www.synstar.com*

SUPERSTOCK



Systems back-up providers can save your data and prevent your business from going under

Phones to the fore

TELEPHONES

TRY working when the telephone is constantly ringing. That is bad enough. Then try working when the telephone never rings. You will probably go out of business.

The arrival of faxes, e-mail and computer networks does not alter the fact that the humble telephone and the telephone wire are the lifeline of all businesses.

Experts say that 80 per cent of processes that are critical to business depend on the telephone.

Neil McLochlin, head of a business continuity working group at British Telecom, says: "It is not just about answering the telephone, it is about data, information and accessibility. You must be online and accessible to your customers."

Roger Giblet, a communications consultant at Telecom Potential, which specialises in business continuity, goes further: "For any business continuity plan, the effective and immediate management of telephone communications is critical. In an emergency, not only is regular telephone traffic jeopardised but the levels of calls are likely to escalate, exacerbating the situation and fuelling the crisis.

"Whether or not the building is evacuated or the switchboard is incapacitated, if callers can't get through then business may be lost. By planning to maintain vital communications, you can avoid unnecessary threats or risks."

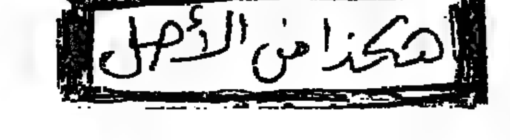
Companies such as Telecom Potential work with clients to determine the types of calls normally received, the different telephone numbers they use and which are the most valuable or important. It then designs a system to segregate the calls in an emergency, answering the most important.

British Telecom can provide a telehousing service where systems and information can be duplicated and housed off the premises.

However, Mr McLochlin says that it may not be necessary to rent or buy a separate building given the trend towards flexible working.

He says: "Many people no longer have a specific place of work. Before, all information was stored only at the place of work. Now it is managed on networks, so by using the phone at home or mobiles, staff can conduct business in a seamless way. The implications of a disaster in one location are less because of that."

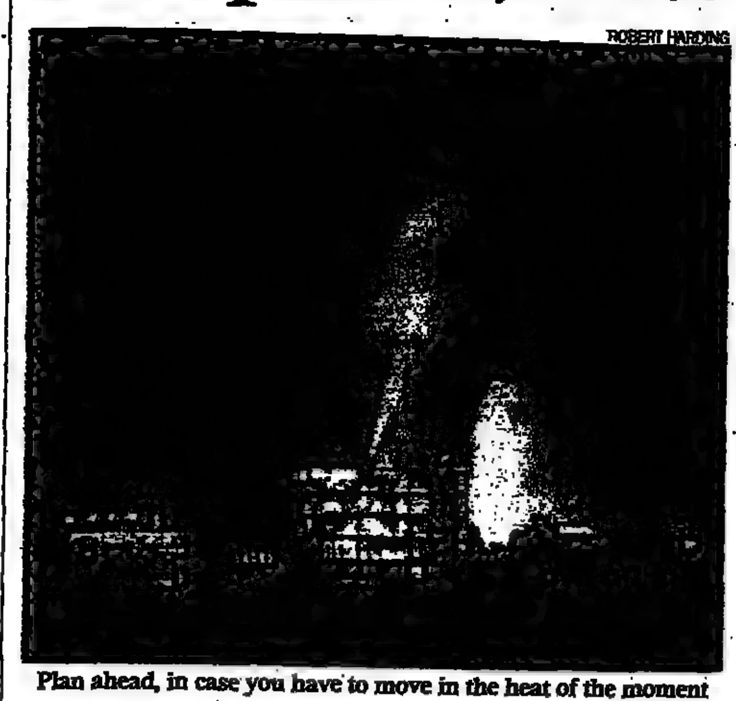
RODNEY HOBSON



Keep cool, dial 999 and then switch to your new offices

Rodney Hobson reports on the support services who ensure that you stay in business when things go wrong

ROBERT HARDING



Plan ahead, in case you have to move in the heat of the moment

It is the little things in life that make business continuity interesting. One such story is told by Paul Barnes, the managing director of Adam Associates, a group that combines business continuity consultancy with specialisation in information technology.

He says: "We were called to a financial institution that had moved into offices with an arboretum. The automatic watering system had not yet been activated, so the caretaker stuck a hosepipe into the earth during his lunch break.

"We got a callout when the company started to lose access to its networks and power was going down sporadically. We moved people on to new equipment while we started to track down the problem. When we lifted the floor we found that all the trays carrying cables were full of water because the hosepipe had slipped out of the soil. How do you plan against that?"

Planning against that kind of incident is, however, what companies must try to do and an array of specialists is on hand to rescue firms struck by the unexpected.

Adam Associates is one of many companies in business continuity that has found there are benefits in offering consultancy and services in a combined operation. Mr Barnes explains: "Business interruptions never go as you expect them to. You have to be able to react quickly, so we put in a professional services side, identifying risks and helping clients to prepare for them.

"As a consultancy there is no point in preaching a message unless you have lived and breathed it and you have been there at 3am when the building is full of smoke."

Adam Associates also helps to build and design fallback sites for companies if their offices are inaccessible because of a disaster.

Keeping offices on standby is still a major service provided by the business continuity sector. Synstar has business recovery centres equipped with computer networks at Livingston, near Edinburgh, Leeds, Birmingham and London, and another about to open at Wellingborough. Any one of 800 clients, mainly from the financial sector, could decamp to one of the sites or call in a mobile unit. At least one of them does every week.

Dave Dignam, the international product marketing manager, says the mobile market, where continuity experts rolled up with an office perched on the back of a lorry, was the original method of rescuing the afflicted, but the main demand now is for fixed sites in buildings.

Some firms occupy niche positions in the business continuity sector, such as storing archives, acting as consultants or restoring buildings after fires or flooding. One niche player is GWC, one of a number involved in printing and mailing, a business that it admits is "probably the least glamorous of all business continuity issues".

It has a dedicated facility for high-speed printing for clients such as Barclaycard. GWC may be called on to print invoices, account statements or mailshots. It can print up to 1.5 million sheets and enclose 500,000 envelopes in a day.

Neil Courtney at Belfor Imbach says that apart from information technology, where there is usually a before and after service, business continuity has tended to split among companies helping to plan to avert disaster and those that pick up the pieces afterwards. He says Belfor is one of the few companies that does both in the field of facilities management.

Among the IT specialists that offer consultancy on mitigating disasters and back-up services if things do go wrong is SG-RS, a subsidiary of the international IT services company Sema. Its customers include eight of the world's top ten financial institutions as well as local authorities and leading retailing, manufacturing, logistics and utility companies.

Guardian, with 1,000 clients including a third of Britain's 100 biggest companies, offers vaults to store critical data, fully-equipped computer sites dotted around the country, and has 11 self-contained mobile units that can be moved to the client's site within 24 hours.

LINKS

http://www.guardiandr.co.uk
http://www.semagroup.com
http://www.belforimbach.com
http://www.synstar.com
http://www.bt.com
http://www.tpg.co.uk
e-mail: business-recovery@gwc.co.uk

The art of turning a crisis into a PR victory

How do businesses best prepare for the day their company goes off the rails, asks **Tony Dawe**

Experts in crisis management are fond of quoting an odd Chinese fact rather than proverb. Apparently, there is no Cantonese word for crisis but two characters are used to convey the meaning. On their own the characters mean "danger" and "opportunity".

Creating an opportunity out of a crisis is becoming an increasingly potent part of business continuity planning. Those same experts can point to examples where companies as diverse as British Midland and Nestlé have profited from calamities by reacting openly and caringly, increasing passengers, customers and share prices when the opposite might have been expected.

"It is essential for businesses to have a plan of action detailing what people should do in the event of something going wrong, whether it's an air crash, contaminated goods or systems failure," says John Sharp, chief executive of the Business Continuity Institute. "They must have a proactive message for the marketplace."

Robert Heath, the managing director of Crisis Corp, adds: "Turning threats into opportunities needs good creative thinkers who can talk positively about the company and how it is capable of handling a crisis.

"They should not rush into saying 'we will take care of everything' because their lawyers won't like it, but if they say nothing the company will be considered uncaring.

> Ministers reached Blackpool late, hot and bothered

"We would arm them with media packages so that they can brief the press and television on the positive aspects of the company and its trouble-free record in the past.

"If there is little information available initially, journalists will pad out their reports with background material. If you give them a proactive package, they will be on the way to creating a story you want. Otherwise they will rely on someone else's speculation."

Examples abound of poor public relations worsening a crisis for a company. Virgin, a brand with an innovative and lively image, compounded the poor perception of its train company by delivering government ministers and party supporters late and uncosseted to last year's Blackpool conference.

JOHN STILLWELL/AP

Virgin rail boss Richard Branson grabs a Blackpool photo opportunity — but make sure your trains run on time

"Within ten days, the regulator had tightened the penalties on Virgin Trains," says Mr Sharp.

"If the company had undertaken a full impact analysis on its business, it would have realised that the conference provided a great opportunity to impress the decision-makers but could also be an opportunity for the reverse."

Shell has also suffered from its attempt to dispose of the Brent Spar oil rig in the Atlantic.

"Greenpeace supporters in Germany blockaded all the Shell service stations and the company's market share plummeted," recalls Mr Sharp.

"The company is now sitting down belatedly to work with Greenpeace and environmental bodies to debate the most effective way of dealing with redundant platforms instead of getting into conflict."

In contrast, Mr Sharp cites last month's hydrochloric acid spillage from the Tioxide Europe plant which affected protected marshland used by wildfowl and wading birds in the Tees estuary.

"Staff had put resources into the site and as soon as it was affected they were eager to clear it up and the company accepted responsibility," he says. "The story died away quickly.

"Another example was a BP oil leak in the Mersey. Sir Bob Reid, then chairman of BP, went on television immediately to say the company would take responsibility and restore everything that had been affected. It would have had to do that anyway but the chairman's honest message created a positive reaction.

"That approach was in complete contrast to the *Exxon Valdez* oil disaster off the Alaskan coast. The company tried to avoid taking responsibility and didn't put up any senior executives for interview."

Michael Seymour, the director of risk management at First & 42nd, says three things must be done simultaneously when a crisis occurs: the problem must be solved, communications controlled and the rest of the business looked after.

"The first is obvious but the others are often forgotten at great cost," he says. "Unless you are careful, communications can lead the issue and the real facts and the perception of the company get muddled up with rumour and speculation."

He says that it is important to gather as much information as possible about what has happened so that you can produce a single accurate picture for the media, bearing in mind not just the general public but customers, regulators and competitors.

"It is equally important to keep staff informed and motivated because if all the decision-makers are sucked into the crisis, the rest of the business will lack direction and employees will become disconcerted and lose momentum."

Mr Seymour insists that a core management team of senior executives, including legal and technical specialists, must be ready to swing into action, know where to operate from and where to brief the media.

They must also know where to find the relevant middle manager with expert knowledge of the particular problem, whether it is a production line manager or an information technology expert.

"Finally when the plans are in place, test and validate them to make sure they work," Mr Seymour says.

THE INTERNET IS A FUNNY THING . . .

DOZENS of sites on the World Wide Web offer helpful tips or stern warnings about the year 2000 computer bug, but on Duh-2000.com the emphasis is strictly on comedy.

The site is at http://www.duh-2000.com and collects the dumbest things said or written about the millennium bug and awards a monthly prize for the silliest. Recently the site warned "only 301 more days to say something stupid about the year 2000".

Past winners have included novelist Tom Clancy and American Vice-President Al Gore. This month it was a telecommunications official in Russia, who said that agencies were half done fixing the problem when they had calculated how much money was needed. Y2K Humour at http://www.doit.state.ct.us/y2k/humor.htm (not to be confused with the *Year 2000 Humour* site at http://www.etckc.com/etcweb07.htm) includes well-known song lyrics and poems rewritten to have a computer crashing theme.

Year 2000 Humour includes 33 tongue-in-cheek reasons not to fear the coming malfunctions including: "You enjoyed your grandparent's stories about the Great Depression and would like to experience them for yourself".

Authors of the best original jokes contest are listed at http://www.year2000.com/y2khumor.html. Laughs among the six winners focus on lawyers, monkeys that work on millennium bug problems and who gets into heaven after the Y2K debacle.

Cartoonist Randy Glasbergen has put up more than a dozen of his Y2K-related designs at http://www.glasbergen.com/y2k.html. A broader array of editorial cartoons on the millennium bug topic are posted at http://www.cagle.com/Y2K/.

There are also a few spoofs that skip right past 2000 and look to potential disasters in later years. The *Y5B* site at http://www.y5b.com theorises that the sun has only enough fuel remaining to burn for five billion years more.

"Don't panic — we still have time," the site says.

Bonds up as equities struggle

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

1998/99 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
646	385	Allied Domecq	468	- 14½	6.5	12.3
412½	278½	Bulmer (HP)	318	+ 4½	5.9	14.2
42½	7	Burn Stewart	11½			
795	432	Diageo	708	+ 8½	2.7	17.4
900	600	Glenmorangie A	605		3.0	16.4
325	225	Highland Dist	245½		4.8	11.2
59½	18½	Macdonald M	35½	...	...	...
563	433	SA Breweries	541½	+ 12½	..	.

BANKS

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FOOD MANUFACTURERS

HEALTHCARE

HOUSEHOLD GDS & TEXT

INSURANCE

INVESTMENT TRUSTS

LEISURE & HOTELS

MEDIA

MINING

OIL & GAS

OTHER FINANCIAL

PHARMACEUTICALS

PRINTING & PAPER

PROPERTY

RETAILERS, FOOD

RETAILERS, GENERAL

SUPPORT SERVICES

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

TRANSPORT

WATER

ALTERNATIVE INV MARKET

BRITISH FUNDS

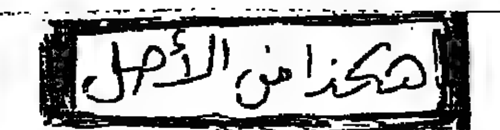
SHORTS (under 5 years)

MEDIUMS (5 to 15 years)

LONGS (over 15 years)

UNDATED

INDEX-LINKED



	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
ACM INVESTMENTS LTD				
0171 470 0100				
Short Dur Gilt	139.00	148.50		
US Govt Bd (US$)	0.8468	0.8556	+ 0.01	..
Gilt Income	55.16	56.04	+ 0.12	5.40
Gilt Growth	100.00	102.50	+ 0.30	
Sterling Bond	56.17	57.17†	+ 0.12	5.50
AIB GOVETT UNIT TRUST LTD				
0171 328 7979 Dealing: 0171 407 7898				
Protected Funds				
UK Safeguard	147.13	156.78	- 0.71	...
-do- NAV to Jan 19	140.39	140.39		
UK Equity Safeguard	117.78	125.05	- 0.52	2.02
-do- NAV to Mar 19	110.98	110.98		
US Eqy Safeguard	97.81	103.95	+ 0.09	..
Cash	954.54	959.41		6.25
UK Growth Funds				
UK Equity Dist	438.16	462.23	- 8.04	1.80
UK Small Cos	95.78	102.43	- 0.25	0.50
FTSE 250 Index	111.37	119.11	- 0.67	1.89
Geared UK Index	#24.712	#26.087	- 0.78	5.75
Income Funds				
Corp Bd	87.72	90.57	+ 0.18	6.66
Monthly Inc	43.58	46.40†	- 0.29	7.98
International Funds				
American Gen	393.48	415.12	- 3.80	0.17
American Strat	176.40	188.13	- 0.02	..
JG US Index	#30.501	#32.222	- 0.16	4.50
European Gen	447.10	472.90	- 0.02	..
European Strat	210.65	224.31	- 0.32	..
Japan Gen	117.18	123.60	- 0.42	.
Asia Pacific	65.18	69.51	- 0.54	1.09
Pacific Strat	93.05	99.54	+ 0.53	..
Greater China	155.77	165.55	+ 2.41	...
Latin America	65.88	70.21	+ 0.67	..
Int Growth	200.88	214.35	- 1.53	0.11
Balanced Europe	187.39	194.19		2.18
Global Strategy	49.54	53.08	+ 0.15	.

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
CANADA LIFE MGMT (UK) LTD				
01707 622 100				
Cap Gen Dist	327.90	347.50†	- 4.30	0.98
-do- Income Dist	180.40	191.10	- 2.20	2.50
-do- Accum	621.00	658.20	- 7.40	2.50
Gilt & Fxd Int	47.99	50.42†	+ 0.31	4.30
Growth Units	393.90	420.20	- 6.60	1.11
Bond	203.20	214.20†	+ 1.00	5
Intl Growth	280.30	297.80	+ 0.60	0.11
North American	434.60	461.00	- 2.10	..
Far East	174.40	185.60	+ 0.10	0.93
UK Smaller Cos	287.20	307.20	- 0.70	1.10
European	140.20	148.80	+ 0.20	0.14
Japanese Growth	32.43	34.38	+ 0.20	
High Income	309.50	331.00	- 3.70	2.65

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Court of Appeal

Law Report March 18 1999

Official Receiver can get costs in person

In re Minotaur Data Systems Ltd

Before Lord Justice Aldous and Lord Justice Sedley

[Judgment March 2]

The Official Receiver could recover his costs as a litigant in person under section 1 of the Litigants in Person (Costs and Expenses) Act 1975 when he acted without representation in disqualification proceedings against a company director.

The costs recoverable by the Official Receiver as a litigant in person were not limited to disbursements but were to be assessed in accordance with Order 62, rule 18(2) of the Rules of the Supreme Court as not more than two-thirds of what would have been allowed if he had been represented by a solicitor.

The Court of Appeal so held in a reserved judgment allowing an appeal by the Official Receiver against the decision of Mr Justice Ferris in the Chancery Division (*The Times* June 25, 1998) upholding the refusal of Deputy Master Thum to permit him to recover, as a litigant in person, costs incurred by him in seeking disqualification orders against three company directors, John Brunt, Paul Derek Silver and Nigel Howard Nugent.

Mr Jonathan Crow for the Official Receiver; Mr Peter J. Martin for Mr Brunt; Mr Silver and Mr Nugent did not appear and were not represented.

LORD JUSTICE ALDOUS, giving the judgment of the court, said that the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986 permitted the court to make a disqualification order against a director whose company had become insolvent and whose conduct made him unfit to be concerned in the management of a company.

Section 7 of the Act gave the Official Receiver locus standi to move for a director's disqualification and rule 10 of the Insolvent Companies (Disqualification of Unfit Directors) Proceedings Rules (SI 1987 No 2023) provided that the Official Receiver had right of audience in such proceedings.

The Official Receiver had obtained disqualification orders in the High Court against the three directors, together with an order against each director that he pay the Official Receiver's costs of the application on an indemnity basis.

When it was lodged, the bill of costs had fallen into two parts: part 1 had related to work done by the Official Receiver himself; part 2 had related to work done by the Treasury Solicitor, who had been instructed for the latter part of the proceedings, and to his disbursements, which included counsel's fees.

No issue had been taken on the recoverability of the costs claimed in part 2. As to part 1, the official receiver had contended that as a litigant in person he was entitled to have his costs taxed according to Order 62, rule 18 of the Rules of the Supreme Court.

Both that rule and the Litigants in Person (Costs and Expenses) Act 1975 dealt with the costs of a "litigant in person" without shedding further light on the ambit of the expression.

The deputy master had concluded that the Official Receiver did not rank as a litigant in person and so could tax no costs under the 1975 Act and Order 62, rule 18. On appeal to the judge, it had been argued on the Official Receiver's behalf that the litigant in person was not, in law, the Official Receiver but the Crown.

Before the Court of Appeal, the official receiver had again put that proposition in the forefront of his argument. As a fallback he had, however, preserved the submission that the Official Receiver, if unrepresented in the conduct of an application to disqualify a director, was himself a litigant in person for the purpose of taxing and recovering his costs.

Did the Official Receiver act in right of the Crown?

The origin of the surprising proposition that an Official Receiver represented the Crown seemed to lie in a departmental note on the origins of the office which contained the following passage:

"Today official receivers are paid employees of the Department of Trade and Industry (ie civil servants) who act under the direction of the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (section 400 of the Insolvency Act 1986) who appoints and removes them (section 399)."

That was in law an incorrect account: but it perhaps explained why the Official Receiver had felt it necessary to develop an elaborate argument to the effect that the Official Receiver being in law the Crown, the Crown could and did act in person through the Official Receiver.

While it was entirely understandable, tactically speaking, that if the Official Receiver wished to construct that petard, Mr Brunt would want to see him hoist with it, a tactical agreement of that kind on a proposition of law could not bind the court.

The office of Official Receiver was not a prerogative office under the Crown, nor was it made by statute a Crown office. It was a statutory office.

But although it was generally occupied by individuals who had until their appointment been civil servants within the Department of Trade and Industry, and although they continued by law to act at and under the direction of the secretary of state, they ceased on appointment to be civil servants in the proper sense of servants of the Crown employed in the business of government within, in the present case, a department of state.

As the holder of a statutory office, each Official Receiver was empowered to bring proceedings, including disqualification proceedings, in his or her own name, and each was accorded by law a right of audience before the court to which he or she was attached. Did that make an Official Receiver who exercised the right a litigant in person?

There were only two possible bases for the answer: either a litigant in person was anyone who conducted proceedings in his or her own name without representation, or there was a hitherto unnoticed third category between the represented and the unrepresented litigant, namely the litigant ex officio.

The latter was not entirely fanciful. An Official Receiver litigated not in his or her personal name but as "The Official Receiver", the definite article being appropriate since in each case one such officer alone was ordinarily empowered to act, and there was an intelligible sense in which it could be said that it was the office and not the individual occupying it which possessed the right to litigate and to conduct proceedings.

The possibility of an office, as distinct from its holder, being a party to litigation derived some support from the decision of the House of Lords in *M v Home Office* ([1994] 1 AC 377, 424). But it would be a further and unwarranted step to devise for procedural purposes a corresponding and novel category of official litigants.

The legal and physical fact in a case such as the present was that the Official Receiver was empowered by law to act without representation in certain civil proceedings. When he or she did so, the description "litigant in person" was apposite.

It would follow, no doubt, that any order for costs made against the Official Receiver would be made against him or her in a personal capacity: but the department would always, without doubt, ensure that they were indemnified out of public funds, just as any costs which they recovered went back into public funds.

The premise on which the appeal had been argued before the judge was therefore unsustainable. The Official Receiver's fallback argument succeeded.

Quantification of costs

The Official Receiver had sought to recover in part 1 his costs assessed under Order 62, rule 18(2) as two-thirds of the sum which would have been allowed if he had been represented by a solicitor.

Mr Brunt had submitted that the Official Receiver had not suffered pecuniary loss as his salary was paid whether or not he was involved in the proceedings and therefore recovery should be limited to £9.25 per hour pursuant to rule 18(3).

The Official Receiver had submitted that just because he and his support staff had their salaries paid in any event, it was not right to say that the costs of the Official Receiver in the proceedings were limited to disbursements.

The costs, like the costs of the Treasury Solicitor in *In re Eastwood (Deceased)* ([1975] Ch 112), were pecuniary in nature and therefore the amount recoverable should be that provided for in rule 18(2).

The court did not believe it to be correct to say that the costs of the Official Receiver were limited to disbursements because he was salaried, any more than it was right to advance that argument in relation to the Treasury Solicitor or a salaried solicitor.

The Official Receiver had incurred costs over and above disbursements. Those costs were pecuniary in nature and amounted to pecuniary loss. It followed that rule 18(2) applied.

Solicitors: Treasury Solicitor; Needleman Treon.

Power to adjourn pending House of Lords' decision

Kingscastle Ltd v Owen-Owen

Before Lord Justice Hirst, Lord Justice Mummery and Lord Justice Buxton

[Judgment February 19]

Provided it correctly exercised its discretion and took account of prejudice to both parties, a court could in an appropriate case adjourn pending the outcome of an appeal to the House of Lords on an issue on which the Court of Appeal had already ruled.

The Court of Appeal so held dismissing an appeal by the plaintiff, Kingscastle Ltd, from a decision of Mr Recorder Paulusz in Shoreditch County Court on April 6, 1998 that the plaintiff's claim against the defendant, Gary Christopher Wayne Owen-Owen, for possession of 25a Cassland Road, Homerton, London, be adjourned on the same terms as ordered by Judge Graham, QC, on January 20, 1998, namely until the first open date after the decision of the House of Lords on an application for leave to appeal in *Fitzpatrick v Sterling Housing Association Ltd* ([1998] Ch 304).

Mr Benedict Sefi for the plaintiff; Mr Jan Luba for the defendant.

LORD JUSTICE HIRST said *Fitzpatrick* was a case in which the Court of Appeal had rejected an appeal of a deceased tenant's gay partner against a possession order in circumstances similar to those of Mr Owen-Owen.

The House of Lords had since granted provisional leave to appeal and the case was due to be heard in April.

Judge Graham's decision to grant the adjournment was clearly an exercise of discretion in which he had carefully weighed up the prejudice to both sides.

The recorder had adjourned on the same terms having considered the exercise of the discretion afresh.

By Order 13, rule 3 of the County Court Rules, the court had a complete discretion upon application or of its own motion to adjourn or advance the date of hearing of any proceedings.

The principles on which adjournment were well known: the main consideration was the balance of prejudice.

His Lordship was quite satisfied that the judge and the recorder had applied the correct principles in the exercise of their discretion. That was sufficient to determine the issue, since the court could only interfere if the exercise of the discretion was plainly wrong.

Mr Sefi had submitted that the court of first instance had a duty to apply the law as it was. In his Lordship's judgment there was no warrant for laying down such a hard and fast rule and no authority for doing so.

Mr Sefi had relied on dicta of Lord Justice Denning in *In re Yates' Settlement Trusts* ([1954] 1 WLR 564, 568):

"The law has been stated by the Court of Appeal in *In re Downshire Settled Estates* ([1953] Ch 218) and Harman J should have applied the law as there laid down, without any misgivings about what the House of Lords might hereafter say."

But in that same case, Sir Raymond Evershed, Master of the Rolls, had stated:

"It may well be that if an important case is known to be subject to appeal to the House of Lords, or to appeal from a judge of first instance to the Court of Appeal, a judge may reasonably and properly think that it is in the public interest not to decide another similar case until the result of the case under appel has become known."

Lord Justice Denning's comment had been based on evidence before the court that the settlor, who was aged 80, was in delicate health and might shortly die.

In his Lordship's judgment each case had to depend on its own facts.

It had been suggested that the recorder should have required evidence and a pleaded defence before granting the adjournment.

But while it might well be that in some cases a direction of that kind might be appropriate, no such suggestion had been made either before the judge or the recorder. They could not be criticised for not giving decisions which they had not been invited to make.

Solicitors: Bishop & Sewell; John Ford, Islington.

Court of Appeal

Parental preference a general principle

Catchpole v Buckinghamshire County Council and Another

Before Lord Justice Stuart-Smith, Lord Justice Thorpe and Lord Justice Sedley

[Judgment March 9]

In deciding what educational provision was appropriate for a child with special educational needs and whether to name a particular school in the child's statement of special educational needs, a local education authority was required to take into account the parents' expressed preference under section 9 of the Education Act 1996 for an independent school.

Paragraph 3(3) of Schedule 27 to the Act, which required a local educational authority to give effect to parental preference for a named maintained, grant-maintained or grant-maintained special school save in certain circumstances, did not exclude the general principle in section 9 which established no more than an obligation to have regard to a general principle of parental preference.

The Court of Appeal so held in a reserved judgment, dismissing an appeal by Michael and Mary Catchpole, against the dismissal by Mr Justice Laws on May 20, 1998, of their appeal against the decision of the Special Educational Needs Tribunal on November 3, 1997 not to amend the school named in a statutory statement maintained in respect of their dyslexic son by Buckinghamshire County Council so as to accord with their expressed preference for a named independent special needs school.

The tribunal had held that, in the case of a child with special educational needs, the obligation to take into account parental preference under section 9 was qualified by paragraph 3 of Schedule 27 to the Act which clearly limited the issue of parental preference to maintained, grant-maintained or grant-maintained special schools.

The tribunal concluded that a residential placement at the independent school preferred by the parents, which their son was already attending, was not necessarily the best thing for him, and that his needs could be met at a named mainstream secondary school maintained by the local education authority. No cost or resource factors entered into the decision.

The parents appealed to Mr Justice Laws who agreed that the tribunal had erred in holding that section 9 had no application in a special needs case, but accepted the submission of the local education authority that a correct interpretation of the law would have made no difference to the outcome.

The parents appealed and the local education authority cross-appealed on the judge's construction of section 9.

Section 9 of the Education Act 1996 provides: "In exercising or performing all their respective powers and duties under the education Acts, the secretary of state, local education authorities and the funding auhorities shall have regard to the general principle that pupils are to be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents, so far as that is compatible with the provision of efficient instruction and training and the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure."

Paragraph 3 of Schedule 27 to the Act provides, in relation to children with special educational needs: "(1) Every local education authority shall make arrangements for enabling a parent on whom a copy of a proposed statement has been served ... to express a preference as to the maintained, grant-maintained or grant-maintained special school at which he wishes education to be provided for his child...

"(3) ... the local education authority ... shall specify the name of that school in the statement unless (a) the school is unsuitable to the child's age, ability or aptitude or to his special educational needs, or (b) the attendance of the child at the school would be incompatible with the provision of efficient education for the children with whom he would be educated or the efficient use of resources."

Mr Nicholas Bowen for the parents; Mr Peter Oldham for Buckinghamshire.

LORD JUSTICE SEDLEY said that section 9 was on its face relevant to all statutory functions under the Act, including functions relating to children with special educational needs under Part IV.

Mr Oldham's contention, however, was that Part IV provided a self-contained code which gave parents much firmer rights than did section 9, making section 9 redundant in special educational needs cases.

Schedule 27 was carefully designed. Paragraph 3(3) made it mandatory for the statement to name the preferred school unless it was unsuitable for the child or incompatible with the efficiency of the school or the efficient use of resources.

As Mr Justice Laws observed, that was far stronger than anything conferred by section 9, which established no more than an obligation to have regard for a general principle of parental preference, qualified likewise by considerations of efficiency and expense.

But the limitation spelt out by paragraph 3(1) was that the expressed preference for a child with special educational needs had to be for a school in the state sector, whether mainstream or special. The question was whether that by necessary implication excluded the broader section 9 principle.

In his Lordship's view it did not. There was nothing either in Part IV, which included Schedule 27, or in section 9 to suggest that the general principle that pupils were to be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents was intended to be disregarded in relation to children with special educational needs.

It was superseded by a potentially more onerous duty in special educational needs cases where the expressed preference was for a school in the state sector; but that made it more likely, not less, that the section 9 obligation was intended to remain in play where the parental preference was for an independent school.

The global effect, when section 411 was brought into the picture, was that in special educational needs cases a duly expressed parental preference for a state sector school was binding in the absence of a disqualifying factor, while an expressed preference for an independent school was to be considered, together with the reasons for it, in the light of the principle enunciated in section 9.

Like Mr Justice Laws, his Lordship concluded that it was unreal to suppose that the tribunal could have come to a different conclusion had it directed itself that section 9 was relevant.

LORD JUSTICE THORPE, concurring, said that the local education authority had a duty to ensure that a child with special educational needs was placed at a school that was appropriate.

It was not enough for the school to be merely adequate. That involved an assessment of what the school offered matched against the child's needs.

If two schools offered facilities and standards exceeding the test of adequacy, his Lordship hoped that the better would be judged appropriate, assuming no mismatch between specific facilities and specific needs.

Parental preference had a part to play in what was appropriate and might be the decisive factor where there was parity of cost and facilities. But parental preference might be ill-informed or capricious.

In practice parental preference might mean a fair opportunity to the parents to contend by evidence and argument for one school in preference to another.

Therefore, preferences had to be reasoned to enable the parent to demonstrate that they rested on a sound foundation of accurate information and wise judgment.

Lord Justice Stuart-Smith agreed.

Solicitors: Teacher Stern & Selby; Mrs Janet Relfe, Aylesbury.

No power to hear judicial office claim

Arthur v Attorney-General

Before Mr Justice Morison, Mr K. M. Hack and Mrs T. A. Marsland

[Judgment March 1]

An employment tribunal had no jurisdiction to decide whether a black woman of West African ethnic origin had been unlawfully discriminated against on the ground of her race by an advisory committee on justices of the peace which had failed to recommend her appointment as a lay magistrate.

The advisory committee was not a qualifying body within the meaning of section 12 of the Race Relations Act 1976.

There was a lacuna in the 1976 Act and it remained for Parliament to decide whether it would be appropriate for employment tribunals to be given jurisdiction over appointments to the lay magistracy.

The Employment Appeal Tribunal so held when dismissing an appeal by Mrs Comfort Arthur, the applicant, from a decision of an industrial tribunal sitting at London (North) in October 1997 that it had no jurisdiction to hear her complaint of racial discrimination.

Section 12 of the Race Relations Act 1976 provides: "(1) It is unlawful for an authority or body which can confer an authorisation or qualification which is needed for, or facilitates, engagement in a particular profession or trade to discriminate against a person ... (b) by refusing, or deliberately omitting to grant, his application for it."

Section 75 provided that Part II of the Act, which included section 12, applied to service for purposes of a minister of the crown or government department "other than service of a person holding a statutory office".

Mr Nigel Giffin for the applicant; Mr David Barr for the Attorney-General.

MR JUSTICE MORISON, giving the judgment of the appeal tribunal, said that appointments to the lay magistracy were made by the Lord Chancellor on behalf of the Crown.

To enable him to carry out that duty he had appointed a number of local advisory panels who interviewed candidates and then made their recommendations as to their suitability for appointment.

The applicant was interviewed by the Middlesex Area Advisory Committee on Justices of the Peace but was not recommended and was not appointed. As a result of the manner of her interview she was of the opinion that the committee's failure to appoint her was tainted by direct racial discrimination.

The industrial tribunal was of the view that appointment to the office of justice of the peace was not the pursuit of a profession or trade within the meaning of section 12 of the 1976 Act since both those expressions meant the carrying on of some sort of business.

The applicant appealed and the Attorney-General cross-appealed on the ground that section 75 of the Act excluded the tribunal's jurisdiction because a justice of the peace was a holder of a statutory office and Part II of the Act had no application to her complaint.

It was not an easy case. It was, as a matter of policy, desirable that judicial appointments should be made in a manner which excluded, as far as practicable, the possibility of bias against any person based on his race, sex or disability.

It was well known that the visible minorities, women, and those with disabilities, were under-represented in the judiciary at every level.

To hold that an employment tribunal had no jurisdiction to inquire into the circumstances under which the applicant was not recommended for appointment would leave open the possibility that a stereotype of a person who would make a good magistrate would perpetuate an under-representation of sections of the community.

On the other hand, what made a person suitable for judicial appointment was difficult to define and there might be policy considerations which suggested that public scrutiny of the process in an adversarial context would or might impair its effectiveness.

Thus, although the appeal tribunal approached the case with a mind toward construing the Act on an inclusive rather than an exclusive approach, they were inclined to accept *Mr Barr's submission* that any loopholes in the legislation were best left to Parliament to deal with.

It seemed to the appeal tribunal that for the reasons given in *Knight v Attorney-General* ([1979] ICR 194), the appointment of a magistrate did not fall within section 75(2) (a) or (b).

However, the fact that a magistrate was an office holder did not of itself determine the answer to the question whether the advisory committee was a qualifying body. On that issue *Knight* was of no assistance.

The only issue was the extent of section 12. The guidance given by the Court of Appeal in *Tattari v Private Patients Plan Ltd* ([1998] ICR 106) was of particular assistance.

Picking on some of the words of the section and seeking to fit the case into them would distort its true meaning and purpose. It could be said that being a magistrate was a vocation or profession and that the approval of the committee was a necessary condition for appointment.

There was a distinction between a committee which was sifting job applications and a qualifying body conferring an approval.

In one sense both were engaged in a filtering process, ensuring that only the suitable might go forward.

But looking at the section overall, it was clear that performing a filter function was not enough. Section 12 required more.

It was directed to circumstances in which A conferred on B a qualification which would entitle B to render services for C. Where A and C were the same entity, the section would appear to be inapplicable otherwise it would apply to every selection panel.

There was no policy reason to give it a more extended reason simply to fill the gap which had been identified in the present case.

The real target of the proceedings should have been the Lord Chancellor. Where there was doubt about the proper defendent when the state was involved as a defendant, the Attorney-General might be the properly identified respondent.

How judicial appointments were made raised constitutional issues. It remained for Parliament to decide whether it would be appropriate for employment tribunals to be gven jurisdiction over appointments to the lay magistracy. There was much to be said for that course.

The appeal would be dismissed and leave given to appeal to the Court of Appeal.

Solicitors: Ms Catherine Evans; Treasury Solicitor.

Appeal might delay release from prison

Regina v Toney

Before Lord Justice Auld, Mr Justice Forbes and Mr Justice David Steel

[Judgment February 12]

Counsel advising on appeal against sentence in the case of relatively short sentences should be alert to the fact that in the event of the appeal not being heard until the defendant had already served much of his sentence, any reduction in sentence could delay rather than accelerate his release from prison.

The Court of Appeal, Criminal Division, so stated on the application by Damien Leonard Toney to vary the sentence of 10 months imprisonment imposed on February 3, 1998, on the hearing of his appeal against a sentence of 13 months imposed on October 2, 1998 by Judge Beashel sitting with two justices at Dorchester Crown Court, for assault occasioning actual bodily harm, common assault and failure to surrender to custody.

Section 34A of the Criminal Justice Act 1991, as inserted by section 99 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, provides: "(3) After the prisoner has served the requisite period for the term of his sentence, the secretary of state may, subject to section 37A below, release him on licence.

"(4) In this section 'the requisite period' means ... (c) for a term of eight months or more, a period that is 60 days less than one-half of the term."

Section 37A, as inserted by section 100 of the 1998 Act provides: "(1) A person shall not be released under section 34A(3) above unless the licence includes a condition ('the curfew condition') which - (a) requires the released person to remain ... at a place for the time being ... specified ... and (b) includes requirements for securing the electronic monitoring of his whereabouts...

"(3) The curfew condition shall remain in force until the date when the release person would (but for his release) have served one-half of his sentence."

Miss Kate Lumsdon, assigned by the Registrar of Criminal Appeals, for the appellant.

LORD JUSTICE AULD said that on February 3 their Lordships had allowed this appellant's appeal against sentence by reducing it from 13 to 10 months imprisonment.

The effect of that reduction, paradoxically, if it stood, was that the appellant would serve longer in prison than he would have done if his appeal had not been allowed.

That resulted from the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 bringing into effect from January 28, 1999, via the Criminal Justice Act 1991, the "home curfew" scheme.

Sections 34A(3) and 37A provided that the secretary of state might release a prisoner on licence, which had to include a condition of curfew and electronic tagging, after he had served the 'requisite period' which for a sentence of eight months imprisonment or more was 60 days less than one half of the term.

The result of that for the appellant was that his original sentence of 13 months imprisonment made him eligible for release on licence, subject to the home curfew for a period of two months, on February 17, 1999; 60 days earlier than April 17, the date at which he would have served half his sentence.

By reducing his sentence to 10 months, the date of release, after serving half that term, had been brought forward to March 2, but it was not possible to release him on home curfew before that date, since 60 days was the period of compliance.

While that was a comparatively short extra period to remain in prison, and did not carry with it the extra curfew, it was not what their Lordships had contemplated or intended.

They took the view that in those special circumstances it was proper to substitute a term of nine months, which would enable him to be released on February 17.

The court was able to vary that sentence and was not functus officio since the order had not yet been transcribed into the record of the court of trial: see *R v Cross* ([1973] QB 937).

Law Report March 18 1999 Privy Council

Pastoral scheme reducing benefice properly made

Cheesman and Others v Church Comissioners

Before Lord Lloyd of Berwick, Lord Hobhouse of Woodborough and Sir Christopher Slade

[Judgment March 17]

A pastoral scheme proposed by the Bishop of Leicester for the redistribution of parishes in part of his diocese had properly been made by the Church Commissioners under the Pastoral Measure 1983 after proceedings against the incumbent under the Incumbents (Vacation of Benefices) Measure 1977 had been discontinued, even though the scheme considerably reduced the size of his benefice.

The Judicial Committee of the Privy Council so held by a majority, Lord Lloyd dissenting, when dismissing an appeal by the appellants, the Reverend Ashley F. B. Cheesman, and 11 others against the pastoral scheme for the benefice and parish of the Gaulby Group made by the respondents, the Church Commissioners for England.

Miss Beverley Lang for the first to eleventh appellants; the twelfth appellant in person; Mr Allen Dyer for the respondents.

LORD HOBHOUSE said that the appeal raised a question of law concerning the construction and application of the Pastoral Measure 1983.

The feature of the scheme which had given rise to the appeal was its sub-division of the single parish known as the "Gaulby Group" into three parts, two of which were to be transferred to adjoining benefices and only one of which was to remain in the Gaulby benefice of which Mr Cheesman was the incumbent.

Such a redistribution of parishes could only be made using the powers granted by the 1983 Measure. The scheme did not exceed those powers.

Therefore, provided that the scheme was, in the words of the title of the Measure, a scheme "designed to make better provision for the cure of souls" and the statutory procedures had been followed, the scheme was one which the bishop and the commissioners were entitled to make. The consent of the incumbents was not a prerequisite.

No question of the bona fides of the pastoral committee of the diocese, the bishop or the commissioners arose.

They believed that the scheme did make better provision for the cure of souls in the diocese and that it was within the powers open to them under the Measure.

The appellants' attack on the scheme was based on the submission that the bishop and commissioners, in so far as they sought to reduce the size of the Gaulby Group benefice, were seeking to exercise powers which could only be exercised under the Incumbents (Vacation of Benefices) Measure 1977, which made provision for the vacation of the benefice, where there had been a serious breakdown of the pastoral relationship between the incumbent and his parishioners.

The correct approach of the Board to the disposal of appeals from decisions of the Church Commissioners in relation to pastoral schemes had been restated in *Hargreaves v Church Commissioners* ([1983] 2 AC 457, 460).

It was a genuine appeal process but the Board had to have in mind that the scheme had the support of responsible bodies within the Church of England which in the present case had considered and weighed the very objections being urged in support of the appeal.

If, however, it were the correct construction of the 1983 Measure that the bishop and the commissioners were debarred from proposing or making any scheme under that Measure in any situation where it was possible to invoke and obtain relief, albeit different relief, under the 1977 Measure, in such a situation a scheme under the 1983 Measure could not be upheld.

The appellants' submission could not be sustained.

First, as a matter of the construction of the 1983 Measure, it was a consolidating re-enactment with some revisions of the pre- existing legislation, in particular the Pastoral Measure 1968.

It could not and should not be construed by reference to the powers introduced by the 1977 Measure, which was based on considerations of incompetence or inadequacy on the part of the incumbent evidenced by a serious breakdown of pastoral relations between the incumbent and the laity in a benefice.

The inquiry required was directed not only to whether there had in fact been such a breakdown but also to whether it was attributable to deficiencies on the part of the incumbent.

A declaration of the vacation of the benefice, that is, the total deprivation of the incumbent of his freehold, could only be justified if both those criteria had been satisfied.

That structure made the implementation of the 1977 procedures cumbersome and uncertain in outcome. The powers under the 1977 and 1983 Measures were different: the criteria were different.

The former did not qualify the latter.

Any scheme proposed or made under the 1983 Measure had to be justified under the terms of that Measure. If it was justified, it should be upheld; if it was not, it could not be upheld.

The appellants' submission was also open to objection on another ground. Mr Cheesman had contested the proceedings brought against him under the 1977 Measure after the quashing of his conviction for an offence of indecency: see *Cheesman v DPP* ([1992] QB 83).

It could not be right as a matter of law that the mere opinion of the bishop that those proceedings if carried through to their conclusion ought to, but not necessarily would have resulted in the vacation of Mr Cheesman's benefice disqualified the bishop from proposing a scheme under the 1983 Measure if be genuinely believed it could be justified under that Measure; nor could it preclude the commissioners from making the scheme if they were satisfied under the 1983 Measure that it should, on its merits, be made.

The appellants had also submitted that any interpersonal factor should be wholly excluded from the assessment of the merits of any proposed scheme under the 1983 Measure, and if the bishop or the commissioners had taken into account the personal characteristics of Mr Cheesman, they had exceeded their powers because such considerations fell exclusively within the 1977 Measure.

If the sole purpose of and the sole change made by a scheme was the vacation of a benefice because of objections to the incumbent the scheme could not be upheld. A broader perspective was required by the 1983 Measure both in relation to the problems it addressed and the changes it made.

The scheme under appeal did both those things. The legal argument, if it was to assist the appellants, had to be made good at the level of saying that any scheme under the 1983 Measure had to be justified in terms which were wholly neutral as to the identity of any given incumbent: the scheme's justification had to exclude any reference to or consideration of who were the incumbents of the benefices affected.

The difficulties about that submission was that it sought to qualify the 1983 Measure and its 1968 predecessor in a way which was not supported by the language of those Measures.

The criterion to be applied was what would make the best provision for the cure of souls in the diocese.

It was a confusion to say that there was a different power given by the 1977 Measure exercisable on different criteria. For the exercise of the powers granted by the 1983 Measure the criterion was the more general one and did not include the exclusion contended for.

Another argument sought to resist the power of the bishop to concern himself with the cure of souls within a parish against the wishes of the incumbent. But it was the bishop who had the cure of souls throughout the diocese and the sole and exclusive cure of souls that the incumbent had within the parish was under the bishop.

Their Lordships therefore rejected the legal arguments of the appellants. However, it was still necessary to examine the scheme and the reasons given by the commissioners for making it to see whether it was on its merits justified under the 1983 Measure.

The effect of the scheme was not equivalent to vacating Mr Cheesman's benefice. He would be left with a benefice, although seriously reduced in population.

His Lordship considered whether the scheme should be upheld on its merits and continued that the scheme was one which could only be made under the 1983 Measure. The rearrangement of parishes could only be achieved under that Measure.

The causes of the pastoral problems addressed were ones which fell exclusively within the 1983 Measure and would simply have served to defeat any continued proceedings under the 1977 Measure.

The fundamental problem was the earlier combination of incompatible parishes and the disputes between parishioners and the irretrievable divisions to which that combination had given rise.

The attack on the validity of the scheme failed and the appeal should be dismissed.

In conclusion, however, their *Lordships wished again to make* clear that in their opinion the 1983 Measure could not properly be invoked as a device where the real purpose was to deprive an incumbent of his benefice or to punish him or where it was solely intended to remedy a breakdown of the pastoral relationship between the incumbent and his parishioners by means covered by the 1977 Measure, that is, the vacation of his benefice.

The present scheme was not such a scheme. It properly fell within the scope of the 1983 Measure and was properly made under it.

Their Lordships' decision should not be understood as sanctioning any disregard of the statutory safeguards to which the incumbent was entitled under the 1977 Measure where his benefice was to be vacated.

LORD LLOYD, dissenting, said that the 1983 Measure was designed to deal with the structure of parishes and benefices within a diocese and their relationship to each other.

Nowhere in the Measure, or in the Code of Practice, was it suggested that what the commissioners *called "interpersonal reasons"*, that is, a breakdown of the pastoral relationship between an incumbent and his parishioners, were relevant in formulating a pastoral scheme, yet they were the reasons on which the commissioners relied.

If cases of pastoral breakdown could be cured by a scheme under the 1983 Measure there would have *been no need for the 1977* Measure.

It could always have been said that the "better provision for the cure of souls" within the parish required the incumbent to be separated from those of his parishioners who opposed him.

The 1983 Measure was never intended to be used for such a purpose. It would provide a most unfortunate precedent.

The scheme could not be justified on the historical, geographical or sociological grounds to which the commissioners referred in their statement of reasons.

The only reason could be the pastoral breakdown between Mr Cheesman and his parishioners, for which the statutory remedy was an inquiry under the 1977 Measure.

It was not a proper use of the *1983 Measure to divide the parish in two so as to remove from his care those of his parishioners who were most dissatisfied with his ministry.*

Solicitors: Ellis-Fermor & Negus, Nottingham; Mr Nigel Johnson, Westminster.

Protecting legal negotiations

Unilever plc v Procter and Gamble Company

Before Mr Justice Laddie

[Judgment February 24]

Statements by either party to a dispute, touching on the strength or weakness of either side's case, and *any valuation of either party's* rights, went to the heart of any attempt to compromise litigation, which parties must be free to discuss without fear of their words coming back to haunt them in court proceedings.

Mr Justice Laddie so held in the Chancery Division, in striking out, as an abuse of process, the writ and statement of claim in an action brought by the plaintiff, Unilever plc, against the defendant, Procter and Gamble Company, seeking a declaration that the sale or manufacture of Persil Performance Tablets would not constitute an infringement of any of the claims of the defendant's European Patent (UK) No 0343069.

Mr Geoffrey Hobbs, QC and Mr Daniel Alexander for the plaintiff; Mr Simon Thorley, QC and Mr Colin Birss for the defendant.

MR JUSTICE LADDIE said that the plaintiff had contended that at a meeting on May 20, 1998, in the context of ongoing and high level settlement discussions on a without prejudice basis, the defendant had made a claim of right and threatened the plaintiff with proceedings for infringement of the patent in suit.

It was common ground that the plaintiff's motive for issuing the current proceedings was an attempt to give it locus to intervene in other proceedings before the European Patent Office.

Scope of the rule

The cornerstone of Mr Hobbs' contention, that only admissions were protected, was *Muller v Linsley and Mortimer* (*The Times* December 8, 1984) *where Lord Justice* Hoffmann, citing Lord Griffiths in *Rush and Tompkins v Greater London Council* ([1989] AC 1280, 1300): "the underlying purpose of the [without prejudice] rule ... is to protect a litigant from being embarrassed by any admission made purely in an attempt to reach a settlement" had said:

"The public policy basis of [that] rule was to prevent anything said in without prejudice negotiations being relied on as an admission."

It appeared to his Lordship that Mr Hobbs had succumbed to the tendency to treat the language of eminent judges as if entitled to the meticulous verbal analysis frequently deployed in construing a statute.

Wider language had been used in other Court of Appeal judgments: *Walker v Wilsher* ((1889) 23 QBD 335, 337); *Cutts v Head* ([1984] Ch 290, 306) and *Calderbank v Calderbank* ([1976] Fam 93, 105).

Mr Hobbs had contended that an assertion of right was not an admission, so could be relied upon in later litigation. But an assertion of right by one party might be dependent on an admission by the other.

It would be impossible to divide up discussions in that way, and if only the former were referred to in later litigation, the resulting picture would be unbalanced. The concept of partial disclosure of privileged documents was as implausible as the curate's egg.

As Lord Justice Oliver had said in *Cutts v Head*, the starting point in deciding the scope of the without prejudice rule was the public policy behind it, the desire to encourage *settlements, an early step in* any negotiation would be for each party to lay its cards on the table.

The rights holder would describe his rights and say why he thought them breached: absent protection by the rule, that would be the triggering event for the start of proceedings by his opponent. Nothing could be more calculated to discourage a rights holder from seeking a compromise.

However, even if *Muller* had the restrictive effect advanced by Mr Hobbs, his Lordship would still hold the defendant's statements protected from use by the plaintiff.

Past encouragement of settlements had been of a hands-off variety, but the current climate was very different. Although the new Civil Procedure Rules were not yet *in force, they represented* the current policy aimed at making litigation a last resort, for example, by having regard, when awarding costs, to the conduct of the parties before proceedings began as well as during them: see rules 44.3(4)(a), (5)(a) and 44.5(3) [coming into force on April 26, 1999].

Lifting the veil

Apart from one or both parties to without prejudice discussions electing to waive privilege, the veil could be lifted by the court:

(a) If a claim to it was not bona fide: as pointed out by Lord Justice Hoffmann in *Forster v Friedland* (unreported, November 10, 1992, CA Transcript 1052):

"The rule covers only those communications which are genuinely aimed at a settlement to avoid litigation" and "the value of the rule *would be seriously impaired if its* protection could be removed [for] 'anything less than unambiguous impropriety".

(b) If there were public policy considerations which override those encouraging the settlement of disputes: for example, if the without prejudice nature of discussions were being used to cover some form of reprehensible behaviour.

As Lord Griffiths said in *Rush and Tompkins* (at p1300D): "The court will not permit the phrase ['without prejudice'] to be used to exclude an act of bankruptcy: see *In re Daintrey, Ex parte Holt* ([1893] 2 QB 116), nor to suppress a threat if an offer is not accepted: see *Kitkat v Sharp* ((1882) 48 LT 64)."

It appeared to his Lordship that where, as here, one party was relying *on some wrongdoing by the* other, in order to show some public interest which outweighed that of fostering non-litigious compromise of disputes, the onus was on him; and that he must show that the wrongdoing was substantial.

So here, the plaintiff's case, in so far as it relied on nothing more than a claim of right made by the defendant during discussions, could not be used as the basis of declaratory proceedings.

Solicitors: Bird & Bird; Simmons & Simmons.

Intermediary's default no excuse

Downes Manor Properties Ltd v Bank of Namibia and Another

Before Lord Justice Robert Walker and Lord Justice Tuckey

[Judgment January 19]

A lawyer outside England chosen *by a plaintiff as an intermediary to* give instructions to an English lawyer who failed to supply adequate witness statements to comply with an unless order was subject to the same policy considerations as those applicable to lawyers qualified and practising in England. Hence the plaintiff could not to be excused on account of the default of its own chosen intermediary in some other jurisdiction.

The Court of Appeal so stated when dismissing an appeal by Downes Manor Properties Ltd against the dismissal by Mr Justice Colman in the Queen's Bench Division Commercial Court on November 15, 1996 of its action against the Bank of Namibia and Mr Tom Alweendo, its deputy governor, for \$2,917,015 from the bank under a letter of guarantee on the *ground of failure to comply* with an unless order relating to exchange of witness statements which had prescribed a period of seven days for compliance.

Mr Jeffrey Burke, QC and Mr Anthony de Freitas for the company; Mr Bankim Thanki for the respondents.

LORD JUSTICE ROBERT WALKER said that Downes realistically accepted, in line with the guidance in *Hytec Information Systems Ltd v Coventry City Council* ([1997] 1 WLR 1666), that an unless order was an order of last resort and was a party's last chance to put his case in order.

Downes unreservedly accepted that it was in default. Nevertheless, Mr Burke submitted that the court's discretion must be exercised in a proportionate way and in such a way that the punishment fitted the crime.

He suggested that failures by lawyers outside England should be regarded as governed by different policy considerations from those applicable to lawyers qualified and practising in England.

His Lordship noted that Downes initially instructed a London firm, Eversheds Jaques & Lewis as it then was, as its solicitors. Those instructions were confirmed by Capco Trust, who were *the Isle of Man managers* providing nominee directors for Downes, but the effective source of instructions appeared to have been lawyers in South Africa, in particular Mr Brian Lebos, a Johannesburg advocate.

Non-compliance with an unless order was always a very serious matter to which the court would show indulgence only if satisfied that a party's default was something beyond that party's control. But the discretion should be exercised flexibly and should not be limited or circumscribed by conditions.

In *Hytec* ([1997] 1 WLR 1666, 1675-6) Lord Justice Ward had said: "Ordinarily this court should not distinguish between the litigant himself and his advisors ... The basis of the rule is that orders of the court must be observed and the court is entitled to expect that its officers and counsel who appear before it are more observant of that duty even than the litigant himself."

There were exceptional circumstances in which the court had made a distinction. But the good sense and justice of the general principle was, in his Lordship's judgment, obvious.

His Lordship did not see that any particular criticism could be made of the part played by the solicitor from *Eversheds Jaques & Lewis* who was on the record at the relevant time and the officer of the court within the meaning outlined in Lord Justice Ward's judgment.

He seemed to have had the greatest difficulty in obtaining instructions and he appeared to have given prudent and correct advice to Mr Lebos about the inadequacy of the witness statements tendered by Mr Lebos.

It appeared to his Lordship that Mr Lebos was not in the position of a solicitor on the record but was in *the position of an intermediary*, and the chosen intermediary, of Downes, for giving instructions to the English lawyers.

If a party was not to be excused on account of the default of its English lawyers, still less, it seemed to his Lordship, was it to be excused on account of its own chosen intermediary in some other jurisdiction.

His Lordship was not persuaded of the exceptional circumstances put forward by Downes. Nor was he persuaded that dismissal of the claim was a disproportionate sanction.

It was quite plain that under the approach which the court now took, any non-compliance with an unless order was a matter for which the court would be very slow to show indulgence, even if there was not a track record of past non-compliance extending over many months or years.

The appeal would be dismissed.

Lord Justice Tuckey agreed.

Solicitors: Broadbridge Grimes; Freshfields.

Previous insurer should not be joined

Myers v Dortex International Ltd

Before Lord Justice Hirst and Lord Justice Buxton

[Judgment February 18]

Where an employer's current insurer was conducting the defence of an action brought by an employee for personal injuries arising out of two accidents, the first of which occurred during the currency of an insurance with a previous insurer, it was not appropriate to join the previous insurer as a second defendant so that the judge could resolve the insurers' respective liabilities.

Were the previous insurer to be joined, the plaintiff would have to face two different defences on causation.

The trial judge could be expected *to give a full reasoned judgment* from which the insurers would be able to determine how liability should be apportioned between them.

The Court of Appeal so held dismissing an appeal by the prospective second defendant, AXA Provincial Ltd, an insurance company, from the refusal by Mrs Justice Steele on October 21, 1998 of their application under Order 15, rule 6(2)(b)(ii) of the Rules of the Supreme Court to be joined in proceedings by Geoffrey Thomas Myers against Dortex International Ltd.

Order 15, rule 6 provides: "(2) Subject to the provisions of this rule, at any stage of the proceedings in any cause or matter the court may on such terms as it thinks just and either of its own motion or on application ... (b) order any of the following persons to be added as a party, namely ... (ii) any person between whom and any party to the cause or matter there may exist a question or issue arising out of or relating to or connected *with any relief or remedy* claimed in the cause or matter which in the opinion of the court it would be just and convenient to determine as between him and that party as well as between the parties to the cause or matter."

Mr David A. Stockdale, QC and Mr Timothy Smith for AXA; Mr Tim Horlock, QC and Mr Richard A. Hartley for Dortex; the plaintiff did not appear and was not represented.

LORD JUSTICE BUXTON said the plaintiff claimed to have suffered two accidents at work which had injured his back.

When the first accident had occurred *in January 1992, AXA had* been the defendant's insurers. By the time of the second accident in June 1993, the defendant had insured with Lloyd's underwriters who had taken charge of the defence.

AXA was contractually liable to indemnify the defendant for any liability to the plaintiff arising out of the 1992 accident. Despite a request from AXA, the plaintiff had *refused to take out separate actions* for each accident.

The judge had dismissed AXA's application, holding in the exercise of her discretion that it would not be appropriate or right for AXA to be joined as second defendant to the plaintiff's action.

In his Lordship's judgment the dispute between the plaintiff and the defendant could be effectively determined and adjudicated in AXA's absence. The judge had correctly considered whether it was just and convenient to determine the issue raised by AXA in the course of the trial of the plaintiff's claim.

AXA's application was objectionable in principle because of the harmful effect joinder would have on the conduct of the trial. The plaintiff was entitled to know what case he had to meet on causation, but if AXA's application succeeded, the plaintiff would have to meet two conflicting cases on causation.

LORD JUSTICE HIRST said the judge hearing the plaintiff's action could be expected in accord*ance with modern practice to give* a full and reasoned judgment from which the insurers would be able to determine the issue of causation and apportionment of liability.

Solicitors: Berrymans Lace Mawer, Manchester; Slater Heelis, Sale.

Approaching victims' statements with care

Regina v H (Indecent assault)

Before Lord Justice Schiemann, *Mr Justice Hughes and Judge* Stephens, QC

[Judgment February 9]

A sentencing judge who was given statements made by victims of a criminal offence setting out its effects on them, as perceived by the maker of the statement, had to approach them with some care as they were necessarily untested by cross-examination since it ill-be*hove a defendant to attempt to in*vestigate them.

The Court of Appeal, Criminal Division, so held in allowing an appeal by H against sentences totalling nine years imprisonment imposed in July 1998 at the Central Criminal Court by Judge Coombe.

Mr Charles Bott, assigned by the Registrar of Criminal Appeals, for the appellant.

MR JUSTICE HUGHES, giving the judgment of the court, said that the appellant had pleaded guilty to 11 counts of indecent assault relating to six different girls, some related to him. The offences took place between 1965 and 1983, when the girls were aged between six and 13.

In mitigation, he had pleaded guilty effectively at the first oppor*tunity which was especially impor*tant *since* none of the victims, although now grown up, was forced to re-live their experiences in court.

The judge was provided with statements made by five of the six complainants, setting out the effects, as seen by them, that those offences had had on them. They indicated that the complainants had been considerably affected.

Some had coped better than others but some clearly felt that the abuse had not only made a serious impact on their own lives but had made them over-protective towards their children. Those were the kind of hidden consequences caused by abuse of that kind.

One statement maker attributed the stillbirth of her child to her experiences and, although that was *probably more indicative of anger* towards the appellant rather than medical fact, it was not wholly irrelevant.

Such statements had to be approached with proper balance. They necessarily reflected one side of the case only.

Their Lordships would have been very surprised if the experienced judge in this case had not approached them in that way, although he did not perhaps make it as clear as he might the limited extent to which the stillbirth was relevant.

Counsel for the appellant had cited two cases *R v Sweeney* ([1998] 2 Cr App R (S) 43) and *R v Densley S* ([1998] 2 Cr App R (S) 17) in support of his argument that the sentencing judge had begun at a point too *high in the sentencing scale if he* was to give full weight to the plea of guilty. Their Lordships agreed.

They were satisfied that the proper total sentence was one of six years imprisonment and the appeal would be allowed to that extent.

European Law Report — Luxembourg

Procurer of insurance for customers exempt from value-added tax

Card Protection Plan Ltd v Commissioners of Customs and Excise

Case C-349/96

Before P. J. G. Kapteyn, President of Chamber and Judges G. Hirsch, G. F. Mancini, H. Ragnemalm and R. Schintgen

Advocate General N. Fennelly

(Opinion June 11, 1998)

[Judgment February 25]

Insurance transactions which were exempt from value-added tax, included the activities of a person who, *not being himself an insurer*, procured cover for his customers through a block policy with an insurer who assumed the risks insured.

It was contrary to Community law for member states to restrict the scope of the exemption for insurance transactions to persons authorised under national law to carry out the activity of insurer.

The Sixth Chamber of the Court of Justice of the European Communities so held, inter alia, on a reference by the House of Lords under article 177 of the EC Treaty for a preliminary ruling on questions relating to Sixth Council Directive 77/388/EEC of May 17, 1977 on the harmonisation of the laws of the member states relating to turnover taxes: common system of value-added tax: uniform basis of assessment (OJ 1977 L145 p1).

Card Protection Plan Ltd offered holders of credit cards, on payment of a sum, a plan intended to protect them against financial loss and inconvenience resulting from the loss or theft of their cards and other items such as car keys and passports. CPP obtained block cover from an insurance company to which it paid premiums, and its customers were mentioned in the policy as the assured.

The services offered by CPP, which corresponded to the insurance cover described in the schedule to the policy, included payment of an indemnity in the event of fraudulent use of cards and other indemnities such as the provision of an air ticket home in the event of loss of cards.

The plan also included other services such as assistance in obtaining replacement credit cards in the event of loss, and the maintenance of a computerised record of customers' credit cards.

CPP was assessed to VAT on the ground, inter alia, that the plan comprised a package of services, all taxable, turning on the maintenance by CPP of a register of card numbers and the provision of a loss notification service in order to avoid any further liability for fraudulent use in the event of loss.

CPP contested the decision on the ground that its supplies were wholly or largely exempt.

Article 2 of the Sixth Directive provides: "The following shall be subject to value added tax: (1) the supply of goods or services effected for consideration within the territory of the country by a taxable person acting as such..."

Article 13(B) provides: "Without prejudice to other Community provisions, member states shall exempt the following under conditions which they shall lay down for the purpose of ensuring the correct and straightforward application of the exemptions and of preventing any possible evasion, avoidance or abuse: (a) insurance and reinsurance transactions..."

The annex to First Council Directive 73/239/EEC of July 24, 1973 on the coordination of laws, regulations and administrative provisions relating to the taking-up and pursuit of the business of direct insurance other than life insurance (OJ 1973 L228, p3), as amended by Council Directive 84/641/EEC of December 10, 1984 (OJ 1984 L339, p21), provides:

"A Classification of risks according to classes of insurance ... Assistance for persons who get into difficulties while travelling, while away from home or while away from their permanent residence."

In its judgment the Sixth Chamber of the Court of Justice held:

The first question referred was whether services such as those sup*plied by CPP to its customers con*stituted "insurance transactions" within article 13(B)(a) of the Sixth Directive, and whether "insurance" in article 13(B)(a) included the classes of activity, in particular "assist*ance," listed in the annex to Direc*tive 73/229 as amended.

The Sixth Directive did not define "insurance transactions" nor was "insurance" defined in Directive 73/239.

However, the essentials of an insurance transaction, as generally understood, were that the insurer undertook, in return for prior payment of a premium, to provide the insured, in the event of materialisation of the risk covered, with the service agreed when the contract was concluded.

It was not essential that the service the insurer undertook to provide in the event of loss consisted in the payment of a sum of money: it could also take the form of the provision of assistance in cash or in kind of the types listed in the annex to Directive 73/239, as amended.

*There was no reason for the in*terpretation of "insurance" to differ according to whether it appeared in the directive on insurance or in the Sixth Directive.

CPP acknowledged that it merely promised its customers to do what was necessary for insurance to be provided to them by a third party, and that it did not itself undertake to provide insurance cover.

It was to be noted that CPP was the holder of a block policy under which its customers were the insured.

It procured for its customers, for payment, in its own name and on its own account, to the extent of the services mentioned in the insurance policy, insurance cover by having recourse to an insurer.

Such a supply of services constituted an insurance transaction within article 13(B)(a).

Although the exemption provisions in article 13 were to be construed strictly, the expression "insurance transactions" was broad enough in principle to include the provision of insurance cover by a taxable person who was not himself an insurer but, in the context of a block policy, procured such cover for his customers by making use of the supplies of an insurer who assumed the risk insured.

The second question concerned the criteria for deciding whether a transaction comprising several elements was to be regarded as a sin*gle supply or as two or more* supplies to be assessed separately.

Having regard to the diversity of commercial operations, it was not possible to give exhaustive guidance on how to approach that problem correctly in all cases.

However, taking into account, first, that it followed from article 2(1) of the Sixth Directive that every supply of a service was normally to be regarded as distinct and independent and, second, that a supply which comprised a single service from an economic point of view should not be artificially split, so as not to distort the functioning of the *VAT system, the essential features of the transaction had to be* ascertained in order to determine whether the customer was being supplied with several distinct principal services or with a single service.

There was a single supply in particular in cases where one or more elements constituted the principal service while other elements were ancillary services which shared the tax treatment of the principal service.

A service was ancillary to a principal service if it constituted for customers not an aim in itself but a means of better enjoying the principal service.

The fact that a single price was charged was not decisive: if, notwithstanding the payment of a single price, circumstances indicated *that the customers intended to pur*chase two distinct services, namely an insurance supply and a card registration service, it would be necessary to identify the part of the single price which related to the insurance supply, which would remain exempt in any event.

The simplest possible method of calculation or assessment should be used.

The final question was whether it was compatible with article 13(B)(a) for the exemption for insurance transactions to be restricted to persons permitted to carry on insurance business under the law of the member state.

At the material time, section 17 of and Group 2 of Schedule 6 to the Value Added Tax Act 1983 exempted, inter alia: "(1) The provision of insurance and reinsurance by persons permitted, in accordance with section 2 of the Insurance Companies Act 1982, to carry on insurance business."

The Sixth Directive was based on the principle of fiscal neutrality, and that principle precluded, other than in cases not presently relevant, lawful and unlawful transactions being treated differently: see Case C-283/95 *Fischer v Finanzamt Donaueschingen* (*The Times* July 2, 1998; [1998] QB 883; [1998] ECR I-3369, paragraph 22).

The United Kingdom Government submitted that restricting the exemption to transactions of au*thorised insurers* was justified in view of the introductory sentence of article 13(B) of the Sixth Directive.

However, that provision made no distinction between lawful and unlawful transactions in national law, and it followed that those two categories of transaction had to be treated in the same fashion.

On those grounds the European *Court ruled:*

1 Article 13(B)(a) of Sixth Council Directive 77/388/EEC was to be interpreted as meaning that a taxable person, not being an insurer, who, in the context of a block policy of which he was the holder, procured for his customers, who were the insured, insurance cover from an insurer who assumed the risk covered, performed an insurance transaction within the meaning of that provision.

The term "insurance" in that provision extended to the categories of assistance listed in the annex to Council Directive 73/239/EEC as amended by Council Directive 84/641/EEC.

2 It was for the national court to determine, in the light of the criteria stated in the judgment, whether transactions such as those at issue were to be regarded for the purposes of VAT as comprising two independent supplies, namely an exempt insurance supply and a taxable card registration service, or whether one of those two supplies was the principal supply to which the other was ancillary, so that it received the same tax treatment as the principal supply.

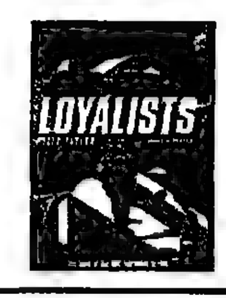
3 Article 13(B)(a) was to be interpreted as meaning that a member state could not restrict the scope of the exemption for insurance transactions exclusively to supplies by insurers who were authorised by national law to pursue the activity of insurer.

BOOKS

The price of remaining loyal unto death

RUTH DUDLEY EDWARDS

LOYALISTS
By Peter Taylor
Bloomsbury, £16.99
ISBN 0 7475 4388 7



Peter Taylor, who has reported on Northern Ireland for the BBC for 25 years, is fascinated by killers. This is his second riveting official history of a group who fill the right-minded with horror and dread. Like its predecessor, which investigated the Provisional IRA, this is based on a BBC television series which relied heavily on interviews with paramilitaries past and present. But though *Provos* was no less absorbing, *Loyalists* is far more valuable.

Innumerable people have written with sympathy of the IRA; few have made the effort to understand the viewpoint of their loyalist counterparts, who are poor at projecting the falsely romantic image in which republicans specialise. Furthermore, because of the values of the Ulster Protestant culture from which they spring, loyalists tend to be more honest than republicans, so for the most part, Taylor's interviews elicit truth rather than propaganda.

Take, for instance, Billy Hutchinson, one of two Assembly members of the Progressive Unionist Party (PUP), frontmen for the Ulster Volunteer Force. Asked if he regretted his part in the murder of two half-brothers, shot dead for being Catholics, he responded: "No. I don't have any regrets. I believe that I was part of the war and that war had to be fought." It is a repellent statement, but a straightforward one.

Loyalist paramilitaries see themselves as patriots who risked their lives and their freedom to defend their community and way of life against IRA terrorism. Their enemies had classified as "legitimate targets" anyone who worked in any capacity for the State, which included more than half the Protestant population of Northern Ireland and a substantial number of Catholics. Loyalists had no such luxury. Ideally, they would have liked to murder republicans, but random Catholics were easier prey.

Operating a tit-for-tat policy, which David Ervine of the PUP has described as "returning the serve", loyalists responded to republican outrages often with sickening brutality. Even the Shankill Butchers, who tortured innocent Catholics to death, claimed in self-justification that it was their job to terrify the Catholic community into forcing the IRA to stop the war. Loyalist paramilitaries believe they played a noble part in defeating violent republicanism and in pubs and clubs in Protestant working-class ghettos they have thousands of fans who hail them as heroes.

There is more reason to believe that their main achievement was to increase Catholic support for the IRA and help republicans win the propaganda war. Still, their leaders have learnt much from their enemies. Like them, they talk of peace while they cling to their weapons, terrorise their communities and operate criminal rackets.

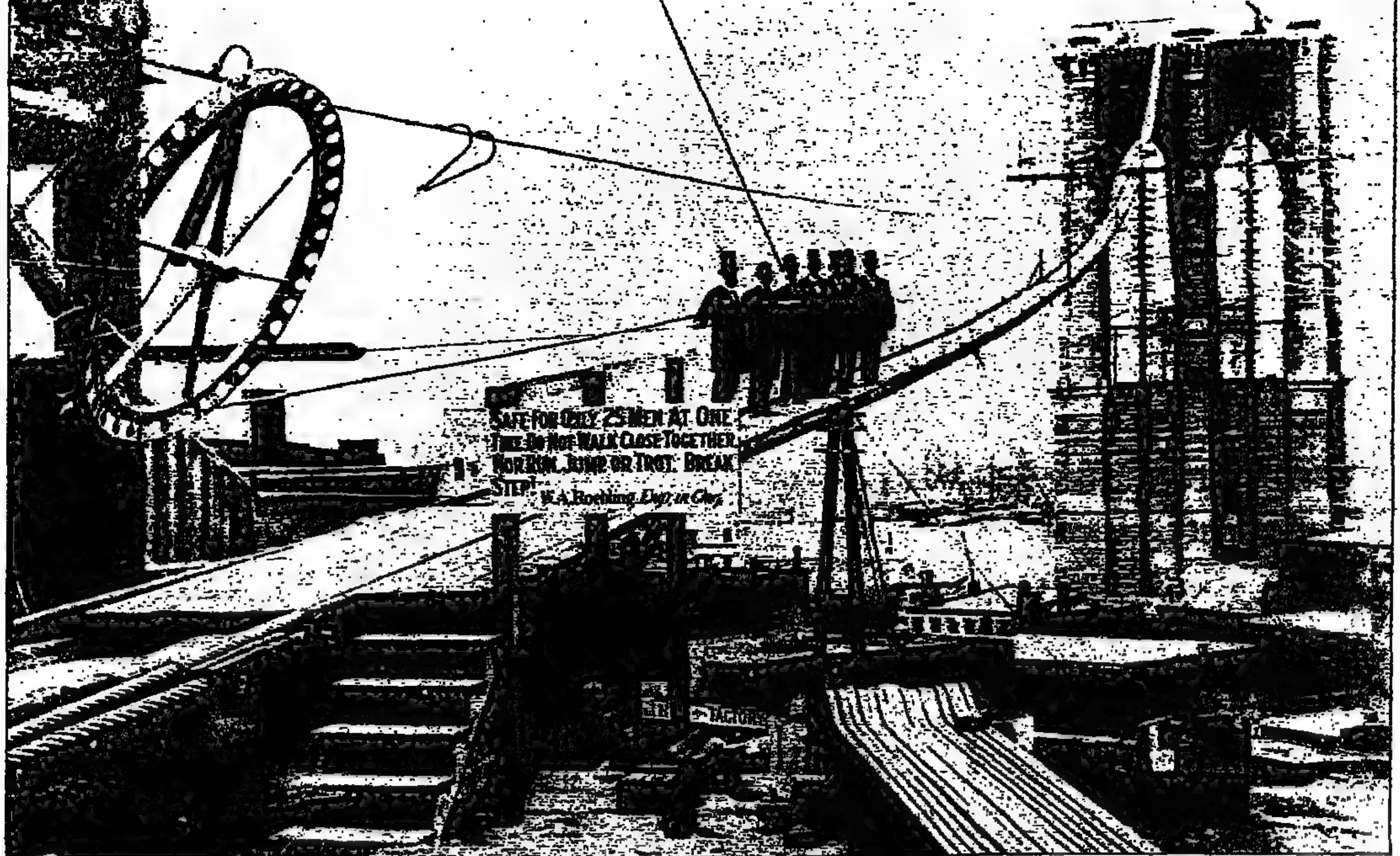
Yet many loyalist murderers started out as idealists. Billy Giles, a decent young man who murdered a Catholic friend in revenge for the shooting of a young woman, served a life sentence and later hanged himself. In his suicide note he wrote: "Please don't let any kid suffer the history I have. I didn't deserve it and they certainly don't." With sympathy and skill, Peter Taylor shows us yet again how Northern Ireland turned ordinary people into killers.

Ruth Dudley Edwards's Faithful Tribe: The Loyal Institutions *will be published by HarperCollins in June.*

PAUL FAITH/PA

Culture wars: Orangeman on the Garvaghy Road

MUSEUM OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK



City in progess: John Roebling's monumental Brooklyn Bridge was completed in 1883; New York's five boroughs were finally consolidated in 1898

Take a bite of the Apple

New York's former mayor **Edward I. Koch** revels in a monumental history of his native city

GOTHAM
A History of New York City to 1898
By Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace
OUP, £30
ISBN 0 19 511634 8



Gotham by its girth may frighten potential readers away or turn it into a coffee table adornment. Either occurrence would be deplorable. The book, at 1,416 pages, is a magnificent, engrossing and informative read. It is meant to be read slowly, if the reader is to absorb the enormous store of information in this scholarly yet vibrant book.

Gotham tells the story of New York City, beginning with the acquisition of Manhattan Island by the Dutch from the Lenape Indians in 1626. The city "founded as a trading post" was destined to "become a city of deal-makers, a city of commerce, a City of Capital," say the authors, Edwin G. Burrows, Professor of History at Brooklyn College and Mike Wallace, Professor of History at John Jay College of Criminal Justice.

The name Gotham, often used to describe New York City, always conjured up for me the picture of a giant, magnificent, yet dark and foreboding city. I learnt that image was foreign to the facts. Gotham was the name given to Manhattan by Washington Irving who, describing New York in a collection of essays, referred to it as the "antient city of Gotham" which means "Goats' Town" in Anglo-Saxon. There is today a village in Nottinghamshire by that name. Gotham was known as "a place of fable, its inhabitants proverbial for their folly". That description may fit us today, but we are what we are and proud of it.

Having been born in the Bronx, I am one of the less than 50 per cent of New Yorkers living in the city who was born there. Since first running for elective office back in 1962, I have said that being a New Yorker is a state of mind. If, after living there for six months you find that you walk faster, talk faster and think faster, you are a New Yorker.

Gotham traces the city's history from its beginning to the consolidation of the five separate jurisdictions — Manhattan, Staten Island, Brooklyn, Queens and the Bronx — that were joined to form New York City in 1898. During a ceremony that I attended as mayor opening the first teleport on Staten Island back in 1985, I declared that island to be the centre of the universe. People the world over have referred to New York as the Imperial City, the centre of world finance, culture and communications. It is *sui generis* and is today what Rome was under Augustus Caesar. All roads and air routes lead to New York City.

What will shock some readers is that during the American Revolutionary War, New York City was a hotbed of Toryism. In 1785 the city's population was roughly 24,000. It is now seven and a half million. More than half the population fled as the battle for New York City was shaping up during the years 1774 to 1776, when it was captured by British General Howe. The Tories returned with a force of 50,000 and "gathered behind British lines in and around New York City by 1782". The city, because of its support for the English monarchy, was called the "Gibraltar of North America".

How surprising it is to learn that before Lincoln's executive order emancipating the slaves, it was British General Clinton in 1779 who issued a proclamation promising "every Negro who shall desert the Rebell Standdard full security to follow within these lines any Occupation which he shall think Proper". They came and formed the Royal African Regiment, the Ethiopian Regiment and the Black Brigade in support of the English. When we won the war and Cornwallis surrendered to George Washington, 40,000 Tories went into exile, overwhelmingly to Canada; as did 4,000 freed slaves. George Washington commanded that those Negroes remaining in New York City be returned to their former owners and slavery.

Beginning in 1795, New York became a major mercantile centre. At the turn of the century, it could claim that it had more banks than any other city in America. In those days, we were the capital of the United States as well as the capital of the State of New York. In 1789, the state moved its capital to Albany and in 1790 the federal capital was moved to Philadelphia.

New York City's new City Hall, started in 1803 and finished in 1812, was at the northern edge of the city — then at Chambers Street. Since the city was not expected to grow further, the front of the building was built of marble and to save money the rear, which no one was expected to observe, was surfaced with brick. I spent 12 years working in that architectural masterpiece as mayor of this gem of a city and personally appreciated its splendid interior and history. It cost $500,000 when built, twice the original estimate — a bargain then and now.

Another great story in *Gotham* is how Manhattan came to be the centre of the current city with its five boroughs. It is told in broad strokes but with sufficient detail to make it an engrossing read. Many residents, particularly in Brooklyn which was then a city on its own, did not want to be drawn into Manhattan's corrupt politics: there were several charter consolidations approved by voters and disapproved by the state legislature at the request of Brooklyn. But reason prevailed: Brooklyn couldn't expand in population because it had no additional water supplies; Manhattan had enough water "to support four million people, or a million more than the combined population of both Brooklyn and New York".

New York City is still the beacon light for all those seeking a better life who believe they can't achieve it at home — whether that home is in the United States or elsewhere. Not everyone who comes here makes it, but if they do they know, as the song goes, they can make it anywhere.

Mike Wallace is currently working on a second volume, which I hope will take us from 1897, when consolidation was signed into law, to the current era. I am also hopeful that I'll be around to read Wallace's assessments of my mayoralty. What's extraordinary is the fascination that the rest of the world has for New York City and its mayors, warts and all.

Edward I. Koch was New York's Mayor from 1977 to 1989.



WEBSITE:
www.nypl.org/research/chss/spe/art/print/exhibits/movingup/
An exhibition at the New York Public Library, showing views of 19th-century Manhattan.

War wounds reopened by television's gaze

AMANDA CRAIG

A FOREIGN COUNTRY
By Francine Stock
Chatto & Windus, £14.99
ISBN 0 7011 6856 0



Journalism is so often dismissed as fiction that it is a small wonder to find its employees increasingly attempting the real thing. With its sudden agendas, inflated personalities and imperative to delete ambiguity in favour of narrative, the television documentary in particular would seem an ideal subject for a novel.

As its title implies, *A Foreign Country* is about the past and its effects on the present. Its heroine, Daphne, is an eccentric, curmudgeonly old lady who lives in the family's decaying beach house on the English coast. Disappointed by her husband, who never fulfilled the promise of early brilliance, she has, like many women of her generation, focused her ambition on her younger son, Oliver.

A golden boy from birth, Oliver is now a television documentary maker, currently making a story out of civil unrest in a breakaway republic of the former Soviet Union. Divorced, he has a pretty but silly girlfriend, Rachel, who wants to make a documentary of her own about Britain's deportation of Italians during the Second World War. Most of these supposed "enemy aliens", who were arbitrarily selected, died when the boat that was transporting them was sunk. One of those responsible for the selection was Daphne.

Stock writes with the cool intelligence tinged with the sympathy and humour that made her, deservedly, an admired television journalist — she is now a presenter of Radio 4's *Front Row*. In her comprehension of how members of a middle class family can fail to communicate, her tone is close to that of Penelope Lively. She is good at conveying the way women, both young and old, negotiate with the world. Rachel's assessment of her career prospects once she is over 30 spring from the same shabby pragmatism as that of Oliver's translator, Niki, who allows him to have sex with her in exchange for a bath in his luxury hotel.

Daphne's merciful oblivion as to quite how much her adored son dislikes her is what gives *A Foreign Country* its sharpest edge. Marginalised from her own life by her wish to render disorder orderly, Daphne extends a hospitality as automatic as it is without savour. Her editing of the human and ambiguous is linked in this double narrative to that of her son Oliver, manipulated abroad by a different political agenda. "Television is bound to simplify," Rachel observes, brightly. What gets left out of the story is the place "where people dare and bleed and weep".

There are many in television who should envy this elegant, well-written and exemplary debut, not least for its light touch regarding the medium's tawdry aspects. Yet it reads like something which has been willed, as an achievement, rather than grown irresistibly and organically out of some inner apprehension of the world it describes. Daphne's fear of feeling (and failing) seems to be shared by the author.

Be bolder next time, please. It is not by intelligence but by passion that the true novelist emerges; without passion and its terrifying risk of making the author look a fool, fiction, like television, disappears into [illegible]ther.

How the mighty fall



IMPEACHMENT
By Charles L. Black Jr
Yale University Press, £10.95
ISBN 0 300 07954 0

THE FASHIONABLE language of impeachment has led one Tory MP foolishly to describe Jack Straw's recent weekend off as a high crime and misdemeanour. This book, published 25 years ago to coincide with Nixon's fall, discusses the process and the law of presidential impeachment. As a plain analysis of complex issues too often overlaid with factional politics, it is succinct and raises fascinating questions of legal interpretation of the relevant constitutional provisions which, strictly applied, could have led to the impeachment of Kennedy for the Bay of Pigs.

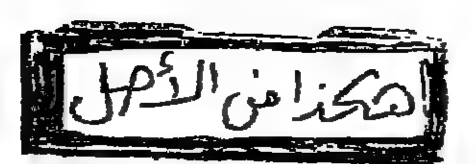
IN MY END IS MY BEGINNING
By James Mackay
Mainstream, £20
ISBN 1 84018 058 7

MONARCHS are more regularly executed than impeached. This derivative life of Mary Queen of Scots is regularly confusing and contradictory as to the motives of the conflicting personalities and policies of European princes and the self-serving Scottish nobility, brutally intent on their own positions. Mary's progress to the block is traced in the context of complex Anglo-Franco-Scottish relations and the religious zealotry of the Reformation. Benignly exculpatory of Mary, Mackay presents her as betrayed by princes, prelates, politicians and the implacable Earl of Moray, her own brother.

FEET OF CLAY
By Roddy Wright
HarperCollins, £12.99
ISBN 0 00 274016 8

RODDY WRIGHT, the former Bishop of Argyll and the Isles who resigned in 1996, plays things *pianissimo*, in contrast to the press who, when they discovered that he had run off with a divorced woman, and the existence of his teenage son, raised a *fortissimo* hue and cry in pursuit. It's a discreet, dutiful book of the mildest autobiographical interest. Wright maintains his faith, doesn't want to change the Church, accepts the law of celibacy in the priesthood, so has nothing to feel but guilt and nothing to say but sorry. He has no bones to pick except with the ravening media. So what's new? Nothing.

IAIN FINLAYSON

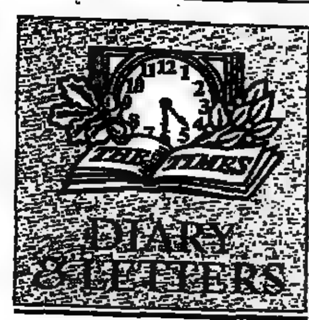


BOOKS

■ REGARDING our Diary item last week on the provenance of Bunbury in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Julia Edwards writes: "Perhaps the young hero of Oscar Wilde's play invented a friend called Bunbury in order to exercise his 'irresistible excuse to slip off into the country' because he had visited, or wished to visit, the real Bunbury in south Cheshire — a village with singular attractions well known to anyone who visits, or is lucky enough to live there." No prizes for guessing from which village in south Cheshire Ms Edwards writes.

■ *THE new £30,000 Samuel Johnson Prize for Non-Fiction, sponsored by an anonymous businessman, has a distinct media and political air about it: James Naughtie of* Today *is to be the first chairman, and Cherie Booth one of the judges. (The others are the historian Orlando Figes, journalist Kate Summerscale and scientist Lewis Wolpert.) The great doctor himself said of his patron, Lord Chesterfield, that it would have been kind if he had given him some notice earlier, but "it has been delayed till I am indifferent, and cannot enjoy it; till I am solitary, and cannot impart it; till I am known, and do not want it". Perhaps Jim and Cherie had better stick to young writers when they draw up their shortlist in May.*

■ WHEN did Ezra Pound become a Fascist? It has always been thought that those unhap-



py leanings began in the early Thirties. But Lawrence Rainey, in the current *London Review of Books*, suggests, on the basis of some new letters, that it was much earlier, in 1923, when he was trying to get into the library at Rimini to do some research and found it closed. The situation was saved when his Fascist hotel-keeper, newly created "*comandante della piazza*", bullied the old librarian into opening it for him. "He is a noble Fascist," Pound wrote to his wife.

■ **THE Moon isn't a usual holiday destination, but this summer, to coincide with the 30th anniversary of the first Moon landing, Jonathan Cape are publishing *The Full Moon* — reproductions of NASA photographs that promise to be the closest most of us will ever get to a trip in outer space. A special ink has been developed to pick out detail on the lunar surface. "You really feel that you are in the capsule with the astronauts," says editor Mark Holborn. One giant leap for books, perhaps.**

■ **books@the-times.co.uk**

Silence does have sound

An investigation of how the Elizabethans perceived what they heard speaks across the centuries



Peter Ackroyd

We begin with a cry and may end, like Hamlet, with "O, o, o, o, o, o"; we are born and die among waves of instinctive and unmediated sound. Sound is like the sea of Genesis, as Bruce Smith remarks in this interesting if on occasions somewhat complicated study. Sound embodies both space and time embroiled one with another in a continually whirling and circulating process. It is the immediacy of human existence itself. So how do we save ourselves from drowning? It is the heart of the subject addressed here in a study of what is called "the cultural poetics of listening" as opposed to simple hearing. The ear receives sensory stimuli all the time, but most are wisely and usefully ignored. We listen only when we begin to pay attention.

Yet systems of sound and communication change all the time: "speech communities" evolve and decay. We do not hear in the same manner that 16th-century people heard. They heard different things, as Bruce Smith suggests, and they responded differently to that which they heard.

Imagine, if you will, an Elizabethan musician suddenly being asked to listen to sounds from a wireless or compact disc. He would not be able to distinguish the sounds which, to him, would be simple cacophony. It might also be suggested that if a late 20th-century audience was miraculously transported to an Elizabethan "concert", it would be unable to understand what was being played.

Noise, perhaps, is also relative — but relative to what? London has since its inception been known as a noisy city, for example, and it is generally assumed that it has become progressively noisier. Yet this is not necessarily the case. In the 17th century the sound of the street and traffic was deemed "excruciating". In the 19th century the noise was compared to that of a cataract or a "crash" of sound: it was a "deafening roar" over which it was almost impossible to hear oneself speak. These conditions now rarely apply, even in the busiest thoroughfares of the late 20th-century city, and we might conclude that London is growing silent. Yet in contrast Bruce Smith suggests that "internal combustion engines and large-scale electrical apparatus" have set up a low noise, or drone, or hum, which blots out smaller and more particular sounds so that modern citizens somehow live in a denuded or desensitised acoustic environment.

There is a remarkable passage on the sounds of late 16th-century London, in which the whole theophony of the city is analysed into its constituent parts — "gurgling water, groaning carts, jingling horses, chattering strollers, barking dogs, market vendors crying their wares". One of the most important of these would have been water, since an Elizabethan Londoner would never have been far from a stream or river.

Smith then goes on to suggest that each area has its own "soundscape", readily distinguishable and identifiable. So we may say, in contemporary terms, that Leeds has a sound different from that of Manchester.

His definition of the 16th-century countryside is equally original. "In an acoustic environment that, apart from barking dogs and the occasional gunshot, lacked any sounds above 60 decibels, all sounds would be present with an intensity quite beyond anything imaginable on the same site today." The pulverising uniformity of electric sound has, in other words, transformed the silence of the rural areas. For Bruce Smith, too, the Elizabethan court was primarily an acoustic theatre in which the volume and nature of speech were predetermined by the spatial arrangements of various chambers; thus the larger ceremonial rooms were employed for "major sound events" while the galleries and closets were given up to whispering and rumour.

The strength of this book lies in its ability to show the familiar or unnoticed aspects of past and present life in a surprising and unfamiliar light. But since Bruce Smith is dealing with the most general and most generally pervasive phenomenon of all, the history of sound must of necessity become the history of almost everything — from speeches and jigs to ballads and festivals. Sound and intonation are also the single most important guides to relative status in conversation and to the manifestation of truth in selected passages of the liturgy. The Welsh, the Irish and the North American Indians were banished from the world of civilised discourse because they made unfamiliar noises. And so Bruce Smith goes from Donne to Castiglione, from Philip Sidney to Francis Bacon, in order to tease out the complexities of human sound.

His centre of interest remains the theatre, however, and of course the "o" of Hamlet's demise resounded through the "wooden O" of the Globe. There is a long chapter here on that playhouse, both in its past and present incarnations, which will no doubt become required reading for actors and directors. "Vibrations in wood may be short in duration," he writes, "but wood catches the harmonic complexities of ambient sound". In practice the wooden theatre "acted as a gigantic sounding board", a rare and wonderful "sound device" beside the noisy Thames.

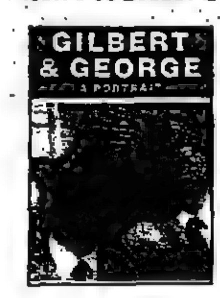
Much of his description is technical in the extreme, but the wealth of material is so great that there are still revealing asides. Boys could successfully assume female parts in the plays of Shakespeare, for example, because "the mode of pitch for 14-year-old boys and adult females has been demonstrated in modern experiments to be exactly the same". This is in many respects an academic and scholarly work, but it demonstrates scholarship with both poetry and purpose. Its aim is nothing less than to reveal a hidden world of meaning and memory, in which half of human life has always resided.

THE ACOUSTIC WORLD OF EARLY MODERN ENGLAND
By Bruce R. Smith
University of Chicago Press, £43.95
ISBN 0 226 76376 5

Dynamic or demonic duo of art?

Rachel Campbell-Johnston finds Daniel Farson's study of Gilbert and George an affectionate portrait — but that it fails to answer the pair's critics

GILBERT AND GEORGE
A Portrait
By Daniel Farson
HarperCollins, £19.99
ISBN 0 00 255857 2



Two identically besuited gentlemen were strolling the streets of a Devonshire fishing village. Seagulls mewed from gently smoking chimney stacks. Shafts of low sunlight pierced a spring mist. And a handsome young couple sat chatting by the churchyard, their baby asleep in a pram at their side. So heart-warming was the sight that one of the gentlemen raised his Panama and bade them good morning. "F*** off, you weird-looking twats!" came the snarling reply.

Gilbert and George — the two identically besuited artists — can scarcely have found this hostility unusual. Alone, either of them might look like any ordinary person. But they never are alone. Ever since they first met at St Martins College of Art in London in the late 1960s, thrown together by a mutual distaste for abstract art, they have lived, worked, eaten and slept together. They have presented a perfectly united front. The effect is more than odd — it is unnerving. It makes people want to shatter the illusion, to trip them up.

If this is what you want, then this biographical portrait is not for you. It scarcely even attempts to shatter the façade. Daniel Farson was too much the friend and fan of London's "living sculptures" to be their betrayers. His concern is not to tear aside the veils of privacy but to offer a gossipy drinking companion's portrait — much as he did for Francis Bacon in *The Gilded Gutter Life* — pleasingly intimate, pleasantly indiscreet, but not probing, or even particularly insightful.

He traces the progress of the two artists from their village childhoods — George's in Devon, Gilbert's in the Dolomites — through their time at art college, to their moving together into a Spitalfields house. After that, he centres the story on the overseas trips which he shared with them when they exhibited abroad, in Moscow, Shanghai, Stockholm and New York. And this is where the strengh of this portrait lies.

Anyone who feels alienated by exterior appearances, by the twin blank stares of these "weird-looking twats", will find themselves beguiled instead, charmed by a blend of old-world politeness and delightfully puerile wit. And there is humour, too, in the confusions of critics confronted by the artists' scatological works. Gilbert and George are said to have done for shit what Andy Warhol did for the soup can. Dan Farson (himself an erstwhile critic) may be an indolent researcher, relying largely on news clippings and second-hand opinions, but he still manages to present the amusing clash of views between those who see Gilbert and George as nothing more than "narcissistic nitwits" and those who find the profundities of some modern-day Masaccio in their work.

But it is the little added extra, the bit you weren't expecting, that makes this portrait most special. Farson died last year and this book, published posthumously, is the swansong of a once esteemed man. "It was in Paris of all places that I lost my panache," he writes in the opening sentence of a chapter which reads like a short story in its own right.

Farson's account of his last journey with Gilbert and George is a study of the loneliness of a dying man: "One banquet too far. I knew it was the end of my journey, and I needed to banish my sense of melancholy," the chapter ends. As Britain's oddest duo of artists are brought to life for the reader, an ill man fades and dies alone.

HERBIE KNOTT

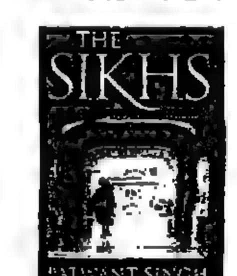


The odd couple: Gilbert and George on the roof of their studio in Shoreditch, London

The Sikh slant on history

TUNKU VARADARAJAN

THE SIKHS
By Patwant Singh
John Murray, £25
ISBN 0 7195 5714 3



I met Patwant Singh for a drink five years ago. It was a very Sikh drink. He poured me a "Patiala peg" of Scotch, devised in the Sikh principality of that name. It is the largest in the world, a monstrous, two-finger measure: with the drink spanning the space between index finger and pinky.

The peg is an appropriate metaphor for the ways of the Sikhs, the unmistakable people of the Punjab who have made themselves at home almost everywhere in the world. They are an adventurous tribe, much given to enjoying life. Their martial qualities are also renowned, as is their penchant for political intrigue.

Mr Singh has written an impassioned book about his people. It is a history book and a portrait of a people, written by a man whose mastery over Sikh history and scripture cannot be questioned. His mastery over his own emotions, however, is often incomplete.

His situation is a complex one. Accomplished, prosperous and urbane, he should, by nature, be a pillar of the Indian establishment. Instead, he comes perilously close to justifying the violent Sikh separatist movement that scarred India in the 1980s and resulted in the death of Indira Gandhi, the Prime Minister. She was murdered by her Sikh bodyguards, in revenge for a military storming of the Golden Temple in Amritsar — the Sikhs' holiest shrine, where armed separatists had dug themselves in.

After her death, lynch-mobs hunted down innocent Sikhs (who, with their turbans, stand out in a crowd) in several north Indian cities. Inquiries have established that 3,870 Sikhs were killed on October 31 and November 1, 1984. Lamentably, not one of the many Congress politician-thugs who led the mobs has yet been tried for murder, and this impunity has left the author with a powerful sense of revulsion towards a *civitas* that so clearly failed his people.

It is a pity, therefore, that Mr Singh does not subject these black days to the hard-headed analysis that he reserves for his account of the earliest years of the Sikh faith. Those years are described in clear-cut, urgent prose that brings to life the ferment of medieval Hindustan. Mr Singh is skilled at telling us about the past. The present, alas, is a much too painful story.

A man's world of tea and toys

RICHARD DAVENPORT-HINES

A MAN'S PLACE
By John Tosh
Yale University Press, £19.95
ISBN 0 300 07779 3



Domesticity, John Tosh argues, was a 19th-century invention. Men had always been expected to establish homes in which they protected and controlled their dependants: but for shopkeepers, merchants and even manufacturers, as well as for many of the labouring poor, the home traditionally doubled as the workplace. The rise of the professional classes and the imperatives of industrial cities changed this, so that in the Victorian age, for the first time in history, a man's living space was distinguished from his workplace. The result was a new masculine taste for domesticity.

Not all men relished this change. Some still felt, as Margaret Thatcher said in 1991, that "home is where you come to when you have nothing better to do". But for others, between 1830 and 1870, the separation of workplace from household was a delight. Home became a sanctuary from the dirt of the factory, the monotony of the desk or the humiliations of the counter. As a London clerk gloated in 1868, the worst that happened at home was "cutting my grass, sticking my beans, doing carpenter's work, drilling my children in music, or mending their toys".

John Tosh is a reflective writer, but very much a man of the 1990s. He approves of any tendency that makes men more physically demonstrative, gentle and empathetic. Thus he admires those early Victorians who "established the 'common sense' of the proposition that to be fully human and fully masculine, men must be active and sentient participants in domestic life". He adjusts the stereotype of repressed Victorian childhood by showing that prosperous English parents who revelled in the comforts of domesticity were "notorious for their pleasure in children, and their petting and spoiling of them".

It disappoints Tosh that many late Victorian Englishmen became disenchanted with homeliness. He chiefly attributes this to the legislative extension of married women's property rights, but indicts the misogyny of the public school system as a subordinate cause. Public schoolboys became "habituated . . . to an all-male society which thrived alternately on comradeship and competition". Always finding masculine emotions safer, they consequently "gravitated towards a world of chambers and clubs".

Tosh believes imperialism was "actively embraced by young men as a means of evading or postponing the claims of domesticity", that is, as a way of preserving "masculine identity" without "constant negotiations with the opposite sex". Yet many of his readers, with their own memories of claustrophobic family life, will recognise the joys of Benjamin "Matabele" Wilson messing with other young men in Rhodesia in the 1890s. "There is no old woman here to tell you 'you are looking pale' or . . . having people fooling around you with a cup of tea . . . or other things you do not want."

The most striking effect on masculine ideals of the late Victorian public schools and colonial service is neglected by Tosh. For the first time in the history of any imperial power, masculinity became identified with sexual restraint rather than sexual prowess. Ideas of manliness were severed from fornication. The apogee of this cult of celibacy was the extraordinary Colonial Office ban of 1909 on its employees having "immoral relations with native women". This massive, unprecedented intrusion of public authority into the private lives of Englishmen was surely the culmination of the redefinition of masculinity.

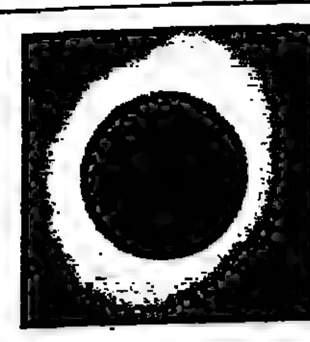
Richard Davenport-Hines's latest book, Gothic, *is published by Fourth Estate at £20.*



THEATRE
Full Marx for night of madcap fun
PAGE 45

THE TIMES
ARTS

HERITAGE
Cornwall prepares for eclipse fever



NEW MOVIES: Suburban paranoia has rarely been more thrilling than in *Arlington Road*, says **James Christopher**

A stranger's a fiend you do not know

The film of the week, **Arlington Road**, is a nerve-shredder that sent me blinking and twitching into the streets of Soho. It's a thrilling piece of paranoia: a political Hitchcock whose opening shots create a mood of deep unease.

Driving home from work, history professor Michael Faraday (Jeff Bridges) comes across his neighbour's son lurching down an empty, suburban street with half his hand blown off by a homemade bomb. Thanks to Faraday's mercy dash to hospital the boy lives and Faraday earns the grateful friendship of the boy's father, Oliver Lang (Tim Robbins). Faraday knows a thing or two about bombs. The suspicious death of his wife, an FBI agent, has blown a gaping hole in his life, and his lectures are dominated by the gory aftermath of random acts of terrorism: the bombing of Federal buildings, trade centres and skyscrapers, icons of the American dream. For Faraday, these aren't random incidents at all, but a meticulous campaign by extremists with vested interests in fear.

Crucially, he can never put his finger on what those interests might be. But he can work his conspiracy theories out in his home in Arlington Road. The small lies and evasions of Lang, his urbane new friend and perfect neighbour, provide enough tinder to set Faraday's suspicions blazing. A structural engineer, Lang gets mail from a college he never went to. The blueprints of a shopping mall Lang claims to be building look like an office block. His past is full of shifty inconsistencies, and his identity is suspect.

The deeper Faraday digs, the wilder and uglier his conclusions. A beautiful friendship turns into an icy standoff. Is Faraday the Neighbourhood Watch gone mad? Or is Lang, supported by his creepily cheery wife (Joan Cusack, superb), the architect of something far more sinister?

It needs at least one great, aching performance to hold it together and Bridges duly delivers. He leans into Robbins like Columbo. Scrunching his eyes into triangular blue chips, he turns from genial neighbour into panting inquisitor. His famously bruised features threaten to cascade down his face. You are never certain of the truth of Bridges's paranoia. You can never quite penetrate Robbins's nerdish mask.

Ultimately, a film that feeds on the fears of what might be, rather than what is, has to cheat. Entire scenes of Mark Pellington's film turn out to be huge, whopping red herrings. A film that works by stealth suddenly turns into a hurtling melodrama. A rumbling soundtrack and expensive set-pieces act on the senses like G-force. There are death-defying car chases, frantic phone calls to old salts in the FBI and dashes to rescue sons from sinister boy scout camps. Sophisticated grumblers will say the film sells out. But you can't help but gasp at the daring of Ehren Kruger's plot — a truly awesome, evil thing that rips your expectations to shreds.

Arlington Road
Warner Village
West End 15, 117 mins
Nerve-shredding thriller with a magnificent performance from Jeff Bridges

Waking Ned
UCI Whiteleys
PG, 91 mins
Lottery Galore! *for an Irish village*

Seul Contre Tous (I Stand Alone)
Curzon Soho 18, 93 mins
Stomach-churning voyage through a butcher's life

Southpaw
Metro 15, 77 mins
Gripping documentary about traveller boxing champ

A Night at the Roxbury
Plaza 15, 82 mins
A night in the ring with Lennox Lewis would be preferable

And so to **Waking Ned**, a tipsy Irish comedy with a tumbler of *Whisky Galore!* in its belly. It's a harmless piece of codswallop, notable mostly for its charming tour of the tics and mores of life in the fictional hamlet of Tully More, population 52 and dwindling.

Ned, a crusty bachelor, is the winner of a lottery jackpot worth £7 million. But his luck causes poor Ned to expire. News of the win, though, does not escape two pickled codgers (Ian Bannen and David Kelly), who go on to hare around on a motorbike in the nude while trying to convince the Dublin lottery rep that Ned is still alive. The desperate duo gradually realise they're going to have to share the pot if they have any hope of pulling this fairytale off. A divisive prize is thus transformed into a romantic community fable in which the real winner is the coastline of the Isle of Man, where the film was actually shot.

Luck is not something that's ever come under the knife of Philippe Nahon in **Seul Contre Tous (I Stand Alone)**. But Gaspar Noe's controversial film enjoyed an unfair slice of it by winning last year's Critics' Prize at Cannes. I have rarely seen a more savage piece of celluloid. Here the life of Nahon's unemployed 50-year-old butcher is chopped out in squalid snapshots. There are no sentimental frills, just the brutal facts of a doomed marriage, an autistic daughter, a prison sentence for GBH and his shabby escape from Paris with his fat and heavily pregnant mistress.

We pick up his miserable story at his mistress's house. Nahon has managed to secure a job as a night porter in a dilapidated rest home. A patient dies. Nahon watches, moved only by how insignificant death is. He goes home to his bloated girlfriend, beats her pregnant stomach until he's made "hamburger pulp" of his unborn child, steals a gun and hitches back to Paris. It gets worse, much worse.

This is strong meat for cast-iron stomachs: an almost unbroken monologue of nihilistic thoughts about the sheer unfairness of life. There is quiet rage at wasted years and a loveless life. There is the never-ending degradation of middle-aged poverty. "Well, drop by again," says one of Nahon's bankrupt clients after giving him the brush-off. "It's always a pleasure." Somehow I doubt many will pick up the invitation.

Nahon gives a monumental performance: watery-eyed and chillingly still. But being locked up in his skull with his pulverising thoughts ranks highly in my list of all-time grimmest artistic experiences. This is life at the bottom of the barrel, a voyeuristic ritual of humiliating scrapings framed by grubby doorways and graffiti-covered walls. There is no such thing as a scenic view. Director Noe pulls some annoying stylistic tricks to lighten the load. Jarring jump-cuts are announced by the sound of a bullet going off in your ear. An invitation to leave the cinema is screened before the gruesome denoument. It's enough to put you off meat forever.

There have been some extraordinary films about boxing: *The Set-Up*, *Raging Bull*, *When We Were Kings*. Liam McGrath's short, humble documentary, **Southpaw**, about the life of Francis Barrett, a 19-year-old traveller from Galway who represented Ireland in the Olympic Games in Atlanta, has every right to be up there with them.

I say humble mainly because it refuses to make a meal out of the discrimination that dogs Irish travellers in their homeland. It's also impossible not to like Barrett's big-hearted bruiser, whisked from training in a discarded lorry container to the giddy heights of the Atlanta Games. It's some story. His triumphs are as coolly appraised as his disasters. McGrath lets his characters, and the meddling local press, speak for themselves.

What he arrives at is no great mould-breaker in terms of poor-boy-made-good. But he does capture a genuinely stirring story of pride and prejudice, fabulous loyalties and sheer guts. The leap of faith made by a local barber, Chick Gillen, who funded a boxing club for the local travellers out of his own pocket, is no less inspired than Barrett's own. This is brave filming, given that it could have been put down by a single punch, or a single lapse in judgment.

Things go downhill from here on. The Butabi brothers (Will Ferrell and Chris Kattan) are the Dumb & Dumber of the LA disco scene. To wit, no right-thinking nightclub bouncer in **A Night at the Roxbury** will let them past the rope. These fortysomething Crimplene kids have absolutely nothing going for them except their humour bypass and habit of getting kneed in the groin by girls with big cleavages. What dudes.

Cheap gags and supremely kitschy sets are the touchstones of John Fortenberry's film, and they are as clearly illuminated as the exit signs in your local cinema.

The rest of the cast all vaguely remind you of someone more famous. Dan Hedaya's father is a dwarf clone of Robert De Niro; Loni Anderson's mother is a surgical reworking of Britt Ekland; and Richard Grieco (ShoWest Award-winner for Male Star of Tomorrow 1991) looks like, well, Richard Grieco (Male Never Was 1999). And there's no evidence that any of them has been to a nightclub in years.



A truly awesome, evil thing that rips your expectations to shreds: Jeff Bridges and Tim Robbins in Mark Pellington's thrill-a-minute *Arlington Road*

LINKS

WEBSITES:
Arlington Road: www.arlingtonrd.com
Waking Ned: www.fox.co.uk
A Night at the Roxbury: www.uip.com

TELEVISION:
Academy Awards - Live, Sunday, 1am, Sky Premier

The world bows to Tinseltown

Geoff Brown laments the loss of international films swept away by the American movie mainstream

Life has few certainties these days, but Eric Rohmer must be one of them. The French director, 79 in August, has been making a new feature film every few years since the 1960s. They do not change greatly in manner. People talk and manoeuvre, seek or avoid love on beaches, in cafés, in Paris apartments, in farmhouses and gardens. Next week the charming *An Autumn Tale* opens in London, concluding Rohmer's quartet of seasonal tales begun in 1989.

But *An Autumn Tale* now seems an anomaly in art-house cinema. Its director is no boy or girl wonder, but a chap whose track record stretches back 40 years. This is not a film hooked to the style of the moment, whether grainy noir pastiche or dizzy urban nightmare.

Rohmer is outside fashion. He is also, with Claude Chabrol and a few others, one of the few survivors from what seems a lost Golden Age, when the map of world cinema looked very different. Go back 30 years, to the movies released in Britain during 1969. France, as usual, was strongly represented. Most New Wave directors — Truffaut, Godard and company — had something on offer. Chabrol, busy chap, had three. Rohmer's contribution was *La Collectionneuse*. Veteran Surrealist Luis Buñuel was still in business (*The Milky Way*).

Italy's crop of British releases included Bertolucci's second film *Before the Revolution*, and two Marxist enigmas from every left-leaning intellectual's favourite, Pier-Paolo Pasolini. Ingmar Bergman beavered away for Sweden with back-up from Bo Widerberg. Nothing from Satyajit Ray in India, but Japan had the best of the old and new: Kurosawa's *Red Beard*, and the sexually explicit *Diary of a Shinjuku Thief* from Nagisa Oshima. Closer to home, New German Cinema, as it was called, was up and running.

Six films alone came from Czechoslovakia. Hungary meant Miklós Jancsó, master of the visually uplifting but baffling allegory (*Silence and Cry*, *The Red and the White*). The USSR thundered with Sergei Bondarchuk's old-fashioned but impressive *War and Peace*. Poland offered Andrzej Wajda's edgy *Everything For Sale*. Even Yugoslavia was heard from, with a double-bill from the mischievous Dusan Makavejev.

Where are these film-makers now? What, indeed, has happened to the venues in London and elsewhere that showed their wares: the Academy, the Paris-Pullman, the Cameo-Poly? Redeveloped. Trapped in Hollywood. Gone to the big projection room in the sky. How easy it would be to grow misty-eyed.

But why have world cinema's identity and population changed so much? Politics play an obvious part in Eastern Europe. By the late Fifties, it was easier to deviate from the Stalinist orthodoxy of socialist realism, but it only took some Soviet tanks or a change of government for film-makers' wings to be clipped.

Public fashion is a factor too. When Solidarity's battles in Poland regularly made headlines in the early Eighties, Polish films were much imported. When Poland stopped being news, audiences faded, and the films stopped being acquired. British interest in a foreign cinema can also dwindle if a star director stops performing. Since Satyajit Ray's death, India has almost fallen off the map; you won't see much sign of Sweden, either, since the retirement of Ingmar Bergman.

Once the taste for a country's cinema is lost, retrieval is difficult. Take Germany. From the late Sixties through the Seventies, the output of Werner Herzog, Wim Wenders, Volker Schlöndorff, and the prolific Fassbinder kept everyone busy. Then Fassbinder died, Herzog's talent vanished, Schlöndorff and Wenders wandered off. Germany is producing films worth exporting again, but public indifference in Britain is huge.

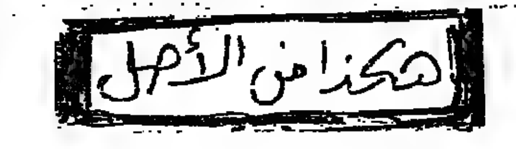
The saddest spectacle is the decline in Asian cinema. Economic and political changes have stemmed the flow of visual treats from directors like Zhang Yimou or Chen Kaige: it would be tragic if Western sensitivity to the oriental eye and mind declined alongside.

This could easily happen. As more films are made, cinemagoers' memories get shorter, and critics are getting less able or willing to jog their elbow. A few distributors, such as Artificial Eye, stick by the old art-house gods. The new interest in Iranian cinema also goes against the trend. But in general world cinema audiences have drifted towards the mainstream: they want their flash bang wallop too. So rejoice in Rohmer's *An Autumn Tale*.

Who knows, it could be a long winter.



The last echoes of cinema's golden age? Beatrice Romand and Alexia Portal in Eric Rohmer's *An Autumn Tale*





Sizzling slice of Bacon

NEW RELEASES ON VIDEO

■ **LOVE IS THE DEVIL**
Artificial Eye, 18, 1998
THE most stimulating British film of 1998 is now available to rent or buy. Derek Jacobi plays Francis Bacon, the painter of some of the century's most tortured works. There's little coverage of Bacon at work: John Maybury's brilliant film concentrates on the artist's stormy relationship with George Dyer (Daniel Craig), who came to burgle and stayed to be his model and lover. Maybury also manages the difficult trick of keeping faith with his experimental roots while reaching out towards mainstream audiences.

■ **MARIUS ET JEANNETTE**
Tartan, 15, 1997
WILL harassed mother Jeannette, just sacked from her job in Marseilles, find health and happiness with Marius, security guard at a disused cement factory? It is hard to care overmuch, though it helps if you appreciate the lashings of Mediterranean colour and writer-director Robert Guediguian's sympathetic eye for human foibles. With Ariane Ascaride and Gérard Meylan.

■ **MERCURY RISING**
CIC, 15, 1998
AN FBI agent on the downward slope (Bruce Willis) takes under his wing a nine-year-old autistic child whose parents have been mysteriously murdered, and who now is in peril himself. The reason lies in the child's brain power: he has unwittingly cracked a top-secret government code. Brain power is not something Harold Becker's film need worry about, but it has enough surface action and intrigue to fill a couple of hours. Not many fireworks with Alec Baldwin, though: he seems to be acting in his sleep as the villain of the piece, a government security agent. A rental release.

■ **SECRET DEFENSE**
Artificial Eye, PG, 1998
LONG, lolloping and idiosyncratic murder mystery from Jacques Rivette, the grey eminence of intellectual French cinema. Sandrine Bonnaire plays a cancer researcher who prepares to avenge the mysterious death of her father, boss of a high-tech company. Rivette spins out his story slowly. A connoisseur's delight.

■ **THIS IS SPINAL TAP**
BMG, 15, 1984
OH JOY, oh rapture! Rob Reiner and company's delicious parody of rock documentaries arrives on DVD with various interactive gizmos to enlarge the fun. Each fictitious member of the veteran British band gets a biographical note: you can read the song lyrics, zoom straight to your favourite quote, or follow the band's disastrous tour across the States on a map. Or, of course, you can watch the film neat.

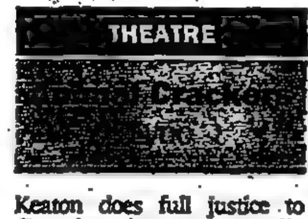
GEOFF BROWN

DONALD COOPER



Anarchy rules, OK? Jean Challis (Mrs Rittenhouse), Ben Keaton (Captain Spalding, aka Groucho) and Hilary O'Neil (Mrs van Damme) in *Animal Crackers*

Masters of mayhem



Who was the poor, put-upon fellow in row K whom Joseph Alessi's Chico and Ben Keaton's Groucho grabbed in the interval and stripped almost to his trousers, muttering: "It's the man from *The Times*"?

No, not yours truly. Yours truly was cowering in the aisles, ready to run if the rampaging Marx Brothers (why, doctor, did I just type "Bothers"?) asked him ritually to humiliate himself. Yours truly was also girding himself for another 70 minutes of what's known in the trade as irresistible fun.

Since nothing better or worse proceeded to occur, I suppose I should be thankful. It is no use going to the Lyric if you don't like programme sellers with joke moustaches or spoof cameramen leaping over you, photographing would-be or actual celebrities. The evening is not aimed at Victor Meldrew, Scrooge, Malvolio, Mr Gladstone, St Simon Stylites, or me. It is aimed at those who are feeling silly, or need to Experience the Child in themselves, or, as Keaton puts it in one of George Kaufman and Morrie Ryskind's genuinely witty lines, want to "sit down and take the weight off your intellect".

Since the piece has already played twice in Manchester, and once at the Barbican, plenty of people clearly belong to one or more of those categories. *Animal Crackers* was first performed on Broadway in 1928, I imagine without the *Riverdance* parody and with Harpo playing a harp rather than a saw, and became a hugely successful film.

The story, which involves the stately Mrs Rittenhouse's attempts to throw a grand reception in honour of the unveiling of a statue, is of course the merest excuse for Marx mayhem. And the first and main argument for Emil Wolk and Gregory Hersov's production is that all three brothers are very well played. If Alessi's flowerpot-hatted Chico could be slyer and more streetwise, Keaton does full justice to Groucho's accent, walk, ogling looks and pseudo-gruff inanities, as does Toby Sedgwick to Harpo's hair, tongue and madcap cavortings.

So, yes, you will enjoy yourself if you are in the mood for archival humour. Keaton will certainly entertain you as he hurls politically incorrect gags at Jean Challis's majestic Rittenhouse or delivers a lecture about his trip to darkest Africa in search of moose, elk and Jesuit: "I bagged six tigers. I bagged them to go but they hung around all afternoon." And, yes, you will be happy if you have a taste for Perelman-style puns and, though some episodes are surely over-long, probably delighted if you like pastiche farce.

Yet a thought struck me as I watched the brothers bring havoc to a concert at Schloss Rittenhouse, or clamber into a box and fling potato crisps at the faces below. This is 1999, not 1928. Don't we have enough anarchic nonsense of our own without needing to reconstruct someone else's? But I am probably as ill-equipped to appreciate *Animal Crackers* as Ezekiel, Lord Reith or Mr Grumpy; so please don't take my word as definitive.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE

Then the drink takes the man



In the mid-1980s, when the Pogues were at their peak, their live performances were the stuff of legend, part punk rock, part traditional Irish knees-up. The Pogues' legacy cannot be overestimated: they single-handedly made the Irish folk idiom popular with a generation which had previously seen it as antithetical to the rock'n'roll aesthetic.

But it's nearly eight years since Shane MacGowan parted company with that now defunct band, and at this stage his infamous drinking habits have taken their toll to such an extent that it seems nothing short of miraculous that he is still with us at all. Thus, MacGowan's annual St Patrick's Weekend hooley in Dublin has become almost as much of an institution as the parade itself.

The audience is overwhelmingly male and overwhelmingly drunk. Even before the show has started groups of booze-sodden blokes are linking arms in the bar and belting out the Pogues' biggest hit, *Fairytale of New York*, as the bar staff — sporting the green and white hoops of Celtic football club and wearing gaudy, plastic Paddy's Day hats that look more like souvenir sandbuckets — line up the next round. The terrace chant of "Shane-o!" reverberates around a heaving Olympia.

Eventually, their hero appears: he moves and sings with the sluggishness of someone who has just woken from a long-term coma. To observe anyone in such a state is a sad and humbling experience, but when it's someone as talented as MacGowan, a knot twists in the sympathetic fan's stomach.

The next half an hour passes by with MacGowan mumbling inaudibly over the pedestrian pub-rock of his band, the Popes, who appropriately are all wearing black. No doubt many of these songs come from their last album with MacGowan, *Crock of Gold*, but it's hard to tell as it's all just a formless blur: the music a half-hearted pick-me-up, the vocals a dull, garbled mess.

The Boys from the County Hell offers us a slight glimmer of hope before MacGowan's mid-set breather, and when he returns it's mostly old Pogues classics from then on. The rowdy, rambunctious crowd hits overdrive as the Ewan MacColl standard, *Dirty Old Town*, kicks in and the momentum is maintained for *Streams of Whiskey* and *Sally MacLennane*. By the time we get to *The Irish Rover* there isn't a dry shirt in the house. But at this stage you're praying for an end to the whole unsavoury spectacle.

NICK KELLY

RECOMMENDED TODAY

Guide to arts and entertainment compiled by Marit Hargie

LONDON

MEPHISTOPHELES: An impressive creative team has come together for the English National Opera's first staging of Boito's fine reworking of the Faust legend. Ian Judge directs the production which has sets by John Gunter and a new translation by Carlos Wagner. Alastair Miles sings the title role with David Rendall as Faust. Oliver von Dohnányi conducts. Coliseum (0171-632 8300). Opens tonight, 7.30pm. ◪

THE COLLEEN BAWN: Dublin's Abbey Theatre brings Conall Morrison's production of a once famous Dion Boucicault play: love and intrigue across the classes in 19th-century Ireland. Lyttelton (0171-452 3000). Opens tonight, 7pm. ◪

THE LION, THE WITCH AND THE WARDROBE: Adrian Noble's spectacular production of the first Narnia adventure comes to town. Barbican (0171-638 8891). Previews from tonight, 7.15pm. Opens March 29, 7.15pm. ◪

NASH ENSEMBLE: In this evening of 20th-century music Martyn Brabbins conducts an all-English programme. Premieres of works by Huw Watkins and Julian Anderson are included alongside earlier pieces by David Matthews, Mark-Anthony Turnage and Jonathan Harvey. Purcell Room (0171-960 4242). Tonight, 7.30pm. ◪

ELSEWHERE

GLASGOW: Alexander Lazarev takes the podium with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra for an evening of fiery Russian music. Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony is preceded by Tchaikovsky's Second Piano Concerto with the renowned pianist Dmitri Alexeev as soloist. The concert is repeated in London tomorrow and Edinburgh on Sunday. Royal Concert Hall (0141-287 5511). Tonight, 7.30pm. ◪

Kent Nagano conducts the Hallé in Manchester

MANCHESTER: Symphonies by two Austrian composers from the 18th and the 19th centuries are juxtaposed in the evening's concert by the Hallé Orchestra. Kent Nagano conducts Haydn's Symphony No 102 followed by Bruckner's Ninth. Bridgewater Hall (0161-907 9000). Tonight, 7.30pm. ◪

WARWICK: Maria Aitken directs the Sphinx Theatre Company in Vita and Virginia, Eileen Atkins's acclaimed dramatisation of the correspondence between Virginia Woolf and Vita Sackville-West. Tour starts here. Warwick Arts Centre (01203 524524). Tonight-Sat, 7.30pm. ◪

NEW WEST END SHOWS

Jeremy Kingston's choice of theatre showing in London
■ House full, returns only ◪ Some seats available □ Seats at all prices

□ **ANIMAL CRACKERS:** Ben Keaton, Joe Alessi and Toby Sedgwick play the three maniacs in a stage version of the Marx Brothers movie. First seen at Manchester's Royal Exchange. See review, left. Lyric (0171-494 5045).

□ **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY:** A second try by New York's long-running intimate revue (showbiz jokes, mostly) to adapt for London audiences. Jermyn Street (0171-287 2875).

□ **TRUST:** Patrick O'Kane plays a Belfast Mr Fixit whose skills disastrously fail his own family. Mick Gordon directs new Gary Mitchell drama. Ambassadors (0171-565 5000).

□ **BLUE HEART:** Caryl Churchill's inventive pair of plays, revealing family troubles by way of tricks with words and time. Pleasance Theatre (0171-609 1800).

■ **SPEER:** Klaus Maria Brandauer directs and plays the title role of Hitler's master architect in Esther Vilar's drama. With Sven Eric Bechtolf. Almeida (0171-359 4404).

□ **TROILUS AND CRESSIDA:** Trevor Nunn and John Caird direct black Trojans and white Greeks, with Peter de Jersey and Sophie Okonedo as the doomed lovers, and Roger Allam, David Bamber, Jasper Britton and Oliver Cotton in the company. Olivier (0171-452 3000). ◪

◪ **MACBETH:** Rufus Sewell and Sally Dexter play the superstitious thane and his missis in John Crowley's production. Queens, W1 (0171-494 5041).

□ **TALK OF THE CITY:** Stephen Poliakoff's potentially fascinating play about BBC censorship in the 1930s. With David Westhead and a charismatic Angus Wright. Young Vic (0171-928 6363). ◪

□ **DEFENDING THE CAVEMAN:** Mark Little makes his West End debut in Rob Becker's new comedy, tracing the origins of the man/woman difference back to the caves. Apollo (0171-494 5070).

□ **SHOCKHEADED PETER:** The Scissorman is back: wonderfully sinister show by the Cultural Industry team with the Tiger Lillies and Martyn Jacques's falsetto screech. Lyric (0181-741 8701). ◪

FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE

James Christopher's choice of the latest movies

NEW RELEASES

PATCH ADAMS (12): Robin Williams puts the comic stitches in this absurd medical movie about a doctor who wants to cure the world with laughter. Director Tom Shadyac extracts an obscene amount of sentiment with as little anaesthetic as possible

PLEASANTVILLE (12): Ingenious spoof of American family values. Two dysfunctional 1990s teenagers get sucked into a squeaky-clean 1950s TV soap. Great performances from Tobey Maguire, Jeff Daniels, and Reese Witherspoon.

CENTRAL STATION (15): Walter Salles's Brazilian road movie creates fabulous chemistry between a young boy in search of his identity, and a cynical ex-teacher in search of her soul. Fernanda Montenegro and Vinicius de Oliveira are astonishing.

SCHIZOPOLIS (18): Steven Soderbergh's experimental satire on corporate anxiety is utter gibberish, with camera angles and dialogue to match.

CURRENT

BELOVED (15): Oprah Winfrey is surprisingly powerful as a runaway slave haunted by poltergeists, lynch mobs, and a dead daughter. Jonathan Demme's overlong film fails, however, to get inside the festering heart of Toni Morrison's Pulitzer Prize winner. With Danny Glover, Thandie Newton, and Kimberly Elise.

FESTEN (15): Thomas Vinterberg's biting, black, Danish farce features a disastrous family reunion. Shot with hand-held cameras, it manages to look spontaneous, ghastly, and deliciously voyeuristic.

THE 39 STEPS (U): Hitchcock's witty take on Buchan's ripping yarn is full of fabulous set pieces. Robert Donat's smooth bachelor dashes across Scotland pursued by scampering police and ruthless spies.

THE THIN RED LINE (15): A glittering cast of American soldiers lose their sanity in the South Pacific during the Second World War. Terrence Malick's artistic masterpiece stars Sean Penn, Jim Caviezel, Ben Chaplin, and Nick Nolte.

YOU'VE GOT MAIL (PG): Bullet-proof romantic blockbuster with Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan who fall in love on the Internet. Written and directed by Nora Ephron.

THIS YEAR'S LOVE (18): David Kane's buzzy comedy charts the mess six Camden Town misfits make of their love lives among the junk stalls. With Kathy Burke, Jennifer Ehle, Douglas Henshall, Dougray Scott, Catherine McCormack and Ian Hart.







HERITAGE

Cornwall in eclipse

NEW CLASSICAL CDS

Vintage operatic voices

Braced for day of dark rites

On Eclipse Day, August 11, Cornwall's ancient sacred sites will be inundated with Pagans and tourists, Marcus Binney reports

In Cornwall they call him Prince of Darkness. He is Brigadier Gage Williams, charged with co-ordinating the county's response to the total eclipse that will strike West Cornwall on the 11th minute of the 11th hour on August 11. At worst, Cornwall fears an invasion of six million visitors causing water shortages, sewage lakes and even typhoid outbreaks — as New Age travellers, cosmologists, druids and assorted Pagans arrive to commune with earth, heaven, myth and mystery.

Brigadier Williams, who is preparing with Eisenhower thoroughness, sets out to dampen the worst fears. He doubts whether it is physically possible for more than 250,000 people to arrive by car per day, plus perhaps 20,000 by train and boat. Thus for six million people to arrive for the eclipse, roads would have to be at full capacity for 24 days both before and after the eclipse. That's rather more time than most of us can spare.

Nevertheless, the predicted pressure on local hospitals is a concern. "Giving birth during an eclipse is the ultimate for Pagans," says Brigadier Williams. "So the druids had a massive love-in in November — just what the health authorities don't want to know."

Officials are also worried about all-night raves at ancient sites. Locals have been seething at the appearance of a flyposted advertisement for a tribal gathering on moorland at Men-an-Tol. A proposed rave at Penwith has prompted calls for farmers to plough the land.

Protective action is being co-ordinated by the Deputy County Archaeologist, Stephen Hartgroves. "We're expecting people to head for the hilltops and high ground where many of the ancient sites are congregated and which are likely to be free of mist. There are 1,500 monuments in the county, and records of 36,000 historic sites if mines and quarries are included."

Worse problems could come if the weather is wet and visitors camp for days or even weeks to get a front seat at key sites. "Lighting fires, digging holes for latrines and clambering on stones are the worst things you can do at ancient sites," says Hartgroves.

Luckily, Pagans themselves may come to the rescue. The delightfully named ASLAN (Ancient Sacred Landscape Network) is producing a sacred sites charter for visitors: an extension of the Countryside Code. Andy Norfolk of the Pagan Federation explains: "Pagans follow a nature-based spirituality. The landscape is regarded as sacred, with circles and stones being sources of special power. The eclipse is seen as a time of power for change, we hope for the good."

Norfolk is a landscape architect who started the Cornish Earth Mysteries Group and became involved with the purchase of the Rollright Stones. He and his colleagues plan voluntary fieldwork to repair sites both before and after the eclipse, co-ordinated with local landowners and the Cornish Wildlife Trust. To avoid inadvertent damage, they are planning open celebrations at several sites including the Hurlers on Bodmin Moor.

"We are planning nothing that would make people feel uncomfortable," he promises. "We may use some prayers produced by the United Nations. It's common for Pagans to call the Quarters, the elemental spirits of the north, south, east and west."

This is mild compared with the celebrations planned by Ed Prynn, the Archdruid of Cornwall. He says: "Most archdruids, like me, are self-appointed. I was a quarryman until I had an accident."

Since then he has been busy erecting stones (the heaviest is 18.5 tons), including a stone circle, a rocking stone, a healing stone and a judgment stone. Clearly he is a great believer in the power of the landscape. "There's not a lane in Cornwall where someone hasn't seen fairies or the little people," he says.

He's planning a week of festivities with a God and Goddess Night (dressing up encouraged), evenings of fortune-telling, and a sun dance (to discourage rain on Eclipse Day). A wedding stone will be erected on the day. Sir Rex Hunt sent him two stones from the Falklands.

By contrast, the National Trust will close its houses for the day. "It's not so much a question of security, just that we won't have enough staff," says Jeremy Pearson, who adds that the NT's gardens will open at 1.30pm. English Heritage is closing Dartmouth Castle but preparing for crowds at Pendennis Castle, which is on the line of totality — as are St Mawes, Restormel, Totnes and Berry Pomeroy.

Tim Smit who has restored the Lost Gardens of Heligan, one of Cornwall's principal attractions, sees the eclipse as a brilliant way of giving the rest of the world a taste of Cornwall. "It's vital that visitors have a pleasant time and don't get ripped off," he says.

The Trevithick Trust, a pioneer in opening up industrial sites, sees just such an opportunity for its Geevor Tin Mine, claimed as the first landfall at the line of totality. It has prepared a special caravan site with hard gravel bases, fresh water standpipes and 24-hour security. The trust's Stuart Smith welcomes visitors, as he is campaigning for this and other mines to be declared World Heritage Sites. "Cornish mining technology dominated the world scene in the 19th century. Cornwall was the byword for technical innovation leaving a unique landscape of engine houses, foundries, terrace houses and chapels."

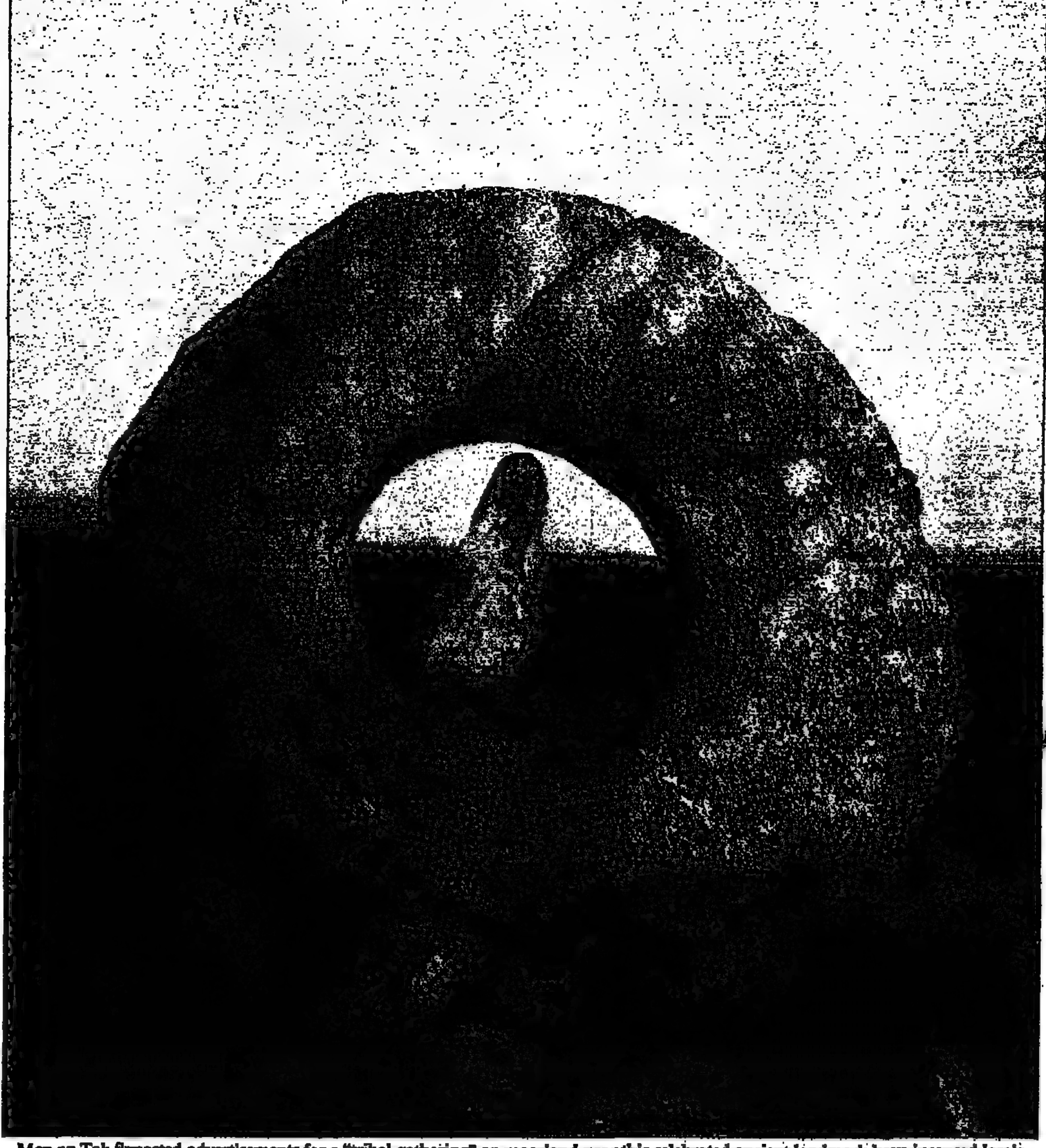
By most people's reckoning Cornwall is better equipped in ancient sites than anywhere else in the country. *Historic Cornwall*, a map guide issued by the County Council, lists 135 sites open to the public. These include Neolithic burrows, ancient villages at Chysauster and Roughtor, Iron Age hill forts at Trencom, Castle-an-Dinas and Warbstow as well as lighthouses at the Lizard, Trevos and Pendeen, art galleries at Newlyn and St Ives, gardens full of exotica at Trebah, Trelissick and Trewithen, and a secret wartime communication centre at Porthcurno. Now being built, but not quite ready for August, is the biggest attraction of them all: the £80 million Eden Centre, a series of glasshouses on the scale of the Waterloo Channel Tunnel terminus which will house the most spectacular plant habitats in Britain.

More than this, Cornwall has one of the finest collections of ancient churches in the country, commemorating Cornwall's many saints. But what will traditional churchgoers make of the influx of Pagans? Peter Burman, former secretary of the Council for the Care of Churches, says: "The church is generous in spirit. Interest in the eclipse reflects the hunger people feel for mystery and otherness. The eclipse pricks curiosity to explore the mysteries of creation."

LINKS

WEBSITES:
www.cornwalleclipse99.com
www.cornwalleclipse.co.uk
www.hermit.org/eclipse1999

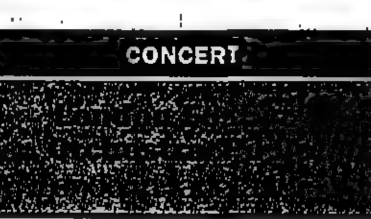
FURTHER READING:
Philip Payton's *Cornwall* (Alexander Associates, Fowey) is the best scholarly study of the county and its sacred and historic sites



Men-an-Tol: flyposted advertisements for a "tribal gathering" on moorland near this celebrated ancient landmark have incensed locals

Music mission to outer space

I looked into the future on Tuesday night. Galaxies and nebulae drifted across the dome overhead. A flautist wearing flashing red lights twittered around the auditorium. Icy mutterings, rap rhythms, clangs and growls soared through loudspeakers and collided with jabbering live instruments conducted by Ross Pople. This was a foretaste of the *Galileo* experience: a project of the London Festival Orchestra, due for completion at the Millennium Dome and venues throughout the country in 2000.



The object is to forge fresh links between music, astronomy and science, and to engage children's minds in composition workshops. Members of the LFO have been sent out to schools with instruments, electronic equipment and two themes for consideration: Galileo the 17th-century astronomer, who peered through a telescope and found many wonders, like spots on the Sun; and Galileo the late 20th-century space mission. The sound material generated so far has been given to a composer, Edwin Roxburgh, for transmutation into a mixed-media work, ultimately some 40 minutes long.

Roxburgh, an accomplished oboist and professor at the Royal College of Music, was a wise choice: any man whose catalogue includes works called *Nebula*, *Saturn* and *Stardrift* (the piece played by the flashing flautist) is obviously happy in outer space. His ear for sonority is acute, and the chunk of his *Galileo* so far performed happily avoids the eerie wails and throbs associated with Fifties science-fiction movies.

For inspiration, Roxburgh said, he used material generated with primary school pupils. From the three workshop samples heard on tape, you could understand why. Two offerings from GSCE students hovered boringly close to rap and pop: not much broadening of the horizons there. But the primary schools' presentation was conceived afresh, conjuring up the icy surface of Europa, one of Jupiter's moons, through whispered syllables and unearthly sounds cold enough to freeze the ears. Roxburgh's live music made merry with the intervals and tone colourings from the workshop material: if this is what outer space is like, we have nothing to fear.

A feeling persists, though, that if you heard Roxburgh's *Galileo* cold, there would be no reason to think of astronomy at all: in times before millennium grants, the piece would probably have been called *Metastasis IV*. Still, it was fun to hear, and the LFO's Galileo project is set to stimulate lot of minds, young and old, in the months to come.

GEOFF BROWN

NEW CLASSICAL CDS: Prize voices from the postwar period soar again

OPERA

■ **STARS OF INTERNATIONAL OPERA**
Dutton CDLX 7034 ★ ★ ★
£10.49

DUTTON, feeling perhaps that it has reached the end of the furrow in its excellent plough through the stars of English opera, has gone international. All the items on the present choice collection come from the immediate postwar years and many of them feature singers who were heard at Covent Garden in the late 1940s, either with visiting companies or as individuals. London orchestras provide most of the backing, generally admirably.

The set begins in cracking form with Margherita Carosio showing just how Bellini should be sung, limpid and clear, in Amina's Act II aria from *Sonnambula*. Generally the sopranos dominate. With the Countess's *Dove sono* from *Figaro*, Maria Cebotari reminds us that she was an early runner in the great Romanian tradition that was to pass through Cotrubas to Gheorghiu. Hilde Konetzni outclasses many more famous rivals in the Marschallin's monologue from *Rosenkavalier*. Only Margherita Grandi sounds past her prime as Elisabetta in *Don Carlos*.

One of di Stefano's earliest recordings, Federico's lament from *L'Arlesiana*, is included. Very good it is too, as is a snatch of Luigi Infantino, airiness itself as the Duke in *Rigoletto*. Five prize baritones are led by Schöffler and Gobbi, the latter marvellously insinuating as Iago. The transfers are first class.

JOHN HIGGINS

RECITAL

■ **HAYDN**
Piano Sonatas
Leif Ove Andsnes
EMI CDC 5 56756 2 ★ ★ ★
£15.99

LONDON will be hearing plenty of the pianist Leif Ove Andsnes this summer when his own chamber-music festival from the Norwegian harbour-town of Risor visits the Wigmore Hall. For the time being, this latest release shows something of the delights of his Haydn playing: less considered and introspective than that of András Schiff, less highly-strung than that of Alfred Brendel.

What Andsnes does so well is to recapture the excitement of a composer writing just at the time when the keyboard was undergoing its most radical changes. Andsnes pays homage to the echoes of harpsichord (for which Haydn wrote his earliest Sonatas) and of Baroque artifice in the brilliance of ornament and the wonderfully variegated hammering figuration of his Sonata No 30 in B minor. And he relishes the risks of the shapes of things to come in the C sharp minor Sonata with its fearless harmonic and dynamic explorations.

In between, the A major Sonata makes enough rhythmic play with Haydn's horncall to give something of a rude awakening to its dedicatee, Prince Esterhazy, before tiptoeing with considerable mischief through a Minuet whose sections cunningly reverse themselves on their reprise.

HILARY FINCH

CDs reviewed in *The Times* can be ordered from the Times Music Shop on 0345 023498

ORCHESTRAL

■ **STENHAMMAR**
Symphony No.2; Excelsior!; Reverenza; 2 Songs
Von Otter/Royal Stockholm PO/Järvi
Virgin VC 5 45244 2 ★ ★ ★
£15.99

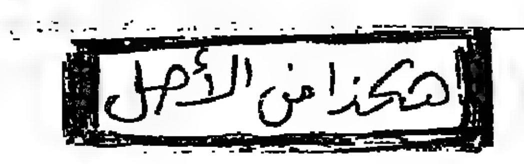
THOUGH never quite becoming the Swedish Grieg that his early promise suggested, Wilhelm Stenhammar (1871-1927) nevertheless established himself as one of his country's most important musicians. His magnificent Second Symphony, a fascinating synthesis of German Romanticism and Swedish folk elements, has been recorded several times (twice by Neeme Järvi).

Now the latter's son Paavo enters the field with the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic, of which he is principal guest conductor. His reading is in places more studied than his father's, also more expansive (notably in the finale where he takes an extra three minutes). But that willingness to linger means that he drains every drop of expressivity and there is no palpable sacrifice in terms of momentum.

The couplings are the aspirational "symphonic overture" *Excelsior!*, the *Reverenza* (a quirky minuet movement dropped by the composer from the Serenade in F), and a pair of delightful songs given by Sweden's most prominent mezzo, Anne Sofie von Otter.

BARRY MILLINGTON

★ Worth hearing
★ ★ Worth considering
★ ★ ★ Worth buying



Bargains of the week: from rambling in the Peak District for single people to a peaceful break on the Tunisian island of Djerba



■ *A selection of last-minute holidays and travel opportunities at home, on the Continent and farther afield, many at bargain prices*

BRITISH ISLES

A WALK ending at a whisky distillery is among excursions on a Highlands package from Countrywide Holidays beginning on Sunday. Six nights' B&B and dinner at Dornoch Hotel costs £199, walking programme and picnic lunches included. Details: 01942 241432.

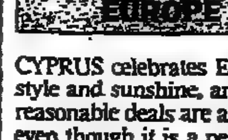
■ MORE rambling is on offer from Solo's, this time for singles in the Peak District over Easter, where three nights' half-board from April 2 costs £259. The company has a similar deal for golfers at Shrewsbury. Details: 0181-951 2800.

■ JERSEY should be at its best over Easter with spring flowers to the fore. Consort Hotels offers free car hire and Sunday lunch as extras on three-night breaks at the Royal Hotel in St Helier, which include B&B, dinner and return flights from Gatwick or Southampton for £240. Modern Hotels offers four nights of B&B with catamaran crossing from Poole for £162. Details: Consort, 01534 726521; Modern, 01534 35511.

■ THE Lakes and a listed building form the Easter offering from Sunvil UK, which has two nights' dinner, B&B at the Grade II Ennerdale Country House Hotel from £109. Details: 0181-232 9788.

■ EASTER camp for the kids can still be booked between April 3 and 10 at activity centres in Norfolk and Staffordshire with Camp Beaumont. Prices start from £99 for short breaks and £208 for a week including full-board and everything from archery to quad biking. Details: 0171-922 1234.

■ THE West of Ireland is available at a good price over Easter from Irish Ferries Holidays. Drive to Pembroke, sail to Rosslare between April 1 and 4 and spend a week travelling to Cork, Killarney and Limerick with B&B along the way for £336. Details: 08705 170000.



CYPRUS celebrates Easter in style and sunshine, and some reasonable deals are available even though it is a peak period. Enjoy the processions and culinary specialities on a week's self-catering holiday with First Choice for £249, with a flight from Gatwick on March 31, or a fortnight in Paphos with Eclipse for £389, with a flight from Manchester on the same day. Details: First Choice, 0870-750 0001; Eclipse, 0990 010203.

■ VATICAN CITY is one of *the* places to be on Easter Sunday and is possible on a week's coach tour to Rome with Leger. Depart from a wide choice of pick-up points in England and Wales on March 31 for the trip, which costs £189, including four nights' B&B in the spa resort of Fiuggi, an hour's drive from the capital. Details: 01709 839839.

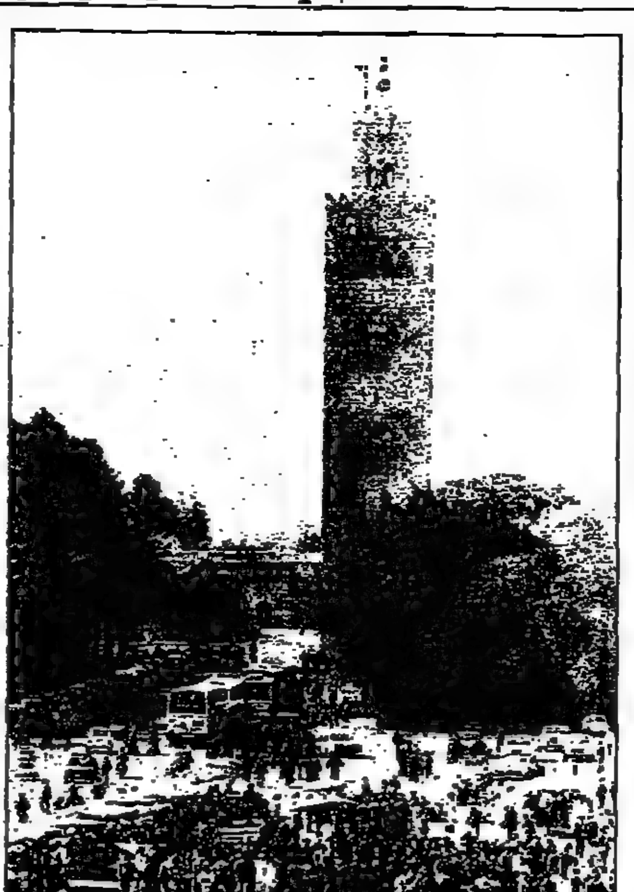
■ LONG breaks at good prices are rare at this time of year but Lunn Poly has four weeks in a three-star hotel at Puerto de la Cruz, Tenerife, for £673, with return flights from Newcastle on Easter Sunday and half-board. Details from the company's Holiday Shops.

■ CAMPING on the Côte d'Azur over Easter is on offer from Canvas Holidays. A party of up to six will pay £271 for a week in a mobile home or £451 for a fortnight, starting between April 1 and 16 and including a short Channel crossing for car and passengers. Details: 01383 644000.

■ DAVY CROCKETT ranch is an alternative offering, and has the added advantage of being part of Disneyland Paris. Two nights in a mobile home that looks like a log cabin from Easter Sunday for two adults and up to four children costs £409 with Eurocamp, including a short Channel crossing for car and family. Details: 01606 787878.

■ LATE-SEASON skiing — cross-country and downhill — is possible on a long weekend in Geilo, Norway, with Inntravel. Fly from Heathrow on April 8 and pay £429 for three nights' full board and ski hire. Details: 01653 628862.

■ TRAVEL after Easter and the bargains are better, with a fortnight's self-catering as far away as Rhodes available from £150 with Olympic-Odyssey. Flights leave Gatwick and Manchester on April 21. Details: 0181-343 9090.


Enchanting Morocco: Djema el Fnaa in Marrakesh

LONG HAUL

NORTH AFRICA often misses out in these columns as it is only three hours' flying time from Britain but certainly not in Europe. To make amends here are a couple of contrasting offers. *Tony Dawe writes.*

Djerba, an island linked to the Tunisian mainland by a causeway, is uncannily peaceful for the region but has good beaches, is close enough to intriguing moonlike landscapes and on offer at good prices from Direct Line Holidays. A week's B&B from April 10 at a four-star hotel costs £305 with a flight from Gatwick and a fortnight is available for £80 more. Details: 0181-239 3399.

Morocco has even more to offer with mountains, desert, walled cities, ancient fortresses — and the most aggressive souvenir salesmen in the world. All can be experienced on a fortnight's tour from April 20 with Prestige Holidays for £1,195 with flights, half-board and entrance fees. Details: 01425 480400.

■ TRADITIONAL warm weather holidays are available from Co-op Travelcare with a fortnight's room-only break in Barbados costing £489, but be quick for this Airtours holiday starts with a flight from Manchester on Monday. Details: 0541 500388.

■ MAURITIUS is never cheap but Sovereign Worldwide is knocking £320 off short breaks to the Indian Ocean island starting between March 26 and 31. Five nights' half-board at a beach hotel costs £895, including flights from Heathrow or Manchester. Details: 0161-742 2224.

■ MALAYSIA is also available at a discount from Thomas Cook Holidays with a fortnight from April 1 at the Shangri La Golden Sands, Penang, costing £635 with return flights from Heathrow. The hotel boasts good leisure facilities and a children's club. Details: 01733 418450.

● *All prices are per person and based on two travelling together and sharing a room unless otherwise stated.*



See *The Times* on Saturday for more flight bargains and last-minute holidays

ATHLETICS

All roads lead to Balmoral for festival

By David Powell, athletics correspondent

ON SUCCESSIVE weekends last April, Paula Radcliffe and Tegla Loroupe ran world best times. This April they will be appearing on the same bill in a two-day festival of road racing at Balmoral Castle. What price the snowman to be there as well?

Last year, there was April snow at Balmoral, but that did not stop Radcliffe annihilating the world best time for five miles. It was a memorable first year for the Compaq road races. The day had begun with Prince William and Prince Harry building a snowman and ended with Radcliffe melting away the opposition.



Radcliffe: defending title

"The big innovation this year is that it is not going to snow," Brendan Foster, the former 3,000 metres world record-holder whose company puts on the event, said. If that cannot be guaranteed, one innovation that can is the throwing open of the royal grounds to a mass participation race.

After Radcliffe defends her five miles title on Saturday April 24, Loroupe will try to win, for the second successive year, the BUPA Great Caledonian Run over ten kilometres on the Sunday. Last year, it was held in October in Edinburgh, but the date and venue have been moved.

"The feedback we got from Balmoral last year was that the elite races were brilliant but could we not throw this open to the public, and that is what we have done," Foster said. "The people in Aberdeen say it will be the most beautiful run in Britain."

As beautiful as it is muscular so far as the talent on show is concerned. Loroupe broke Ingrid Kristiansen's 13-year-old marathon world best in Rotterdam last year and, though she is returning to Holland to defend her title, she has committed to Balmoral seven days later.

For the Compaq men's race, organisers have announced the inclusion of Paul Tergat, from Kenya, who stands on the threshold of history, for in Belfast on Sunday week he will attempt to become the first man to win five successive world cross-country titles.

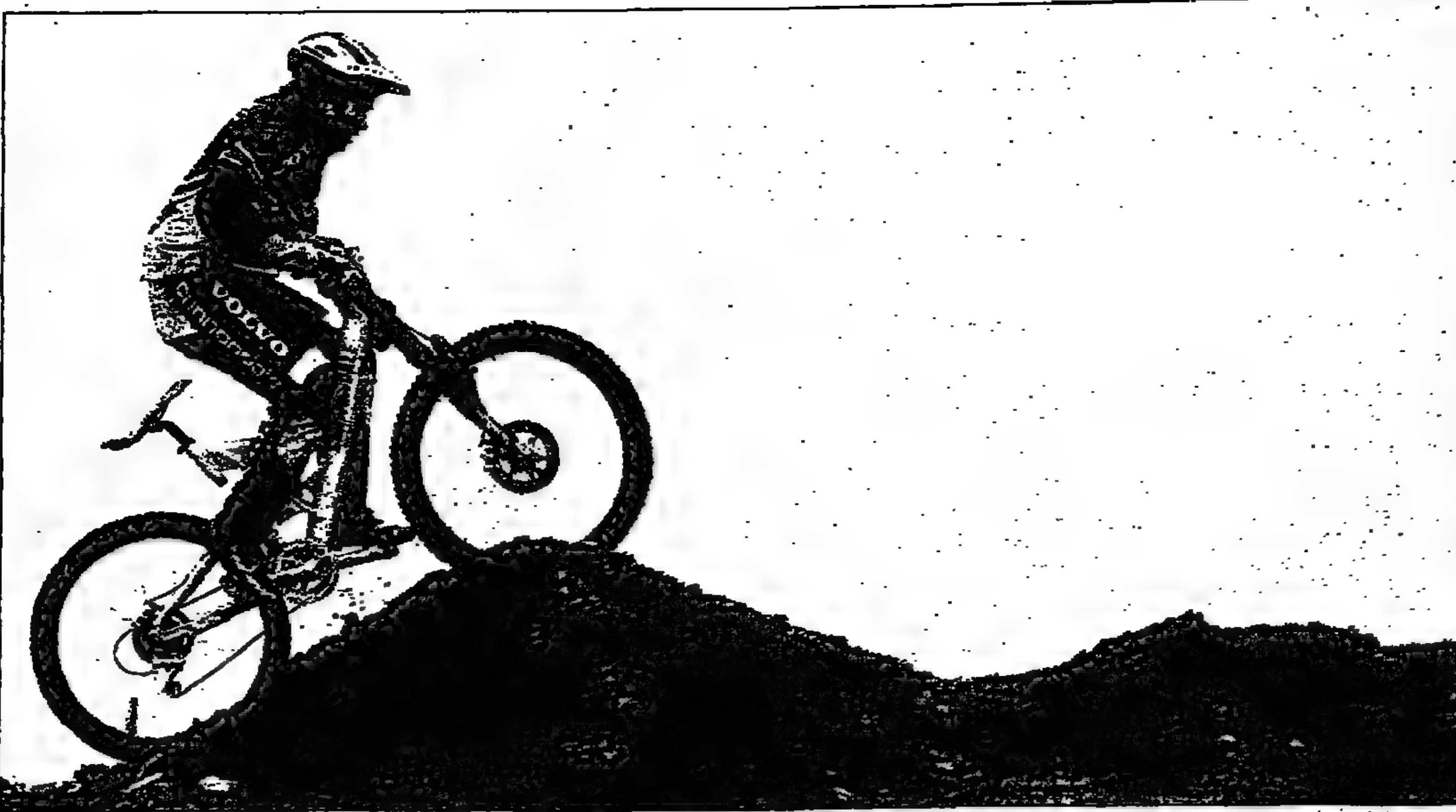
Tergat, a former world record-holder for 10,000 metres, took up running only after being conscripted into the Kenyan Air Force in 1990. One of 17 siblings — his father had three wives — he is a man who thinks beyond the boundaries of running.

He shares an import-export business with Moses Tanui and the pair also run an athletics magazine. Sounds like another Brendan Foster — champion athlete turned successful businessman — in the making.

The festival is on the weekend of April 24-25, one week after the Flora London Marathon.

TO ENTER: Telephone 01538-702100, or write to: 1999 BUPA Great Caledonian Run, PO Box 512, Cheadle, Stoke on Trent ST10 4RJ.

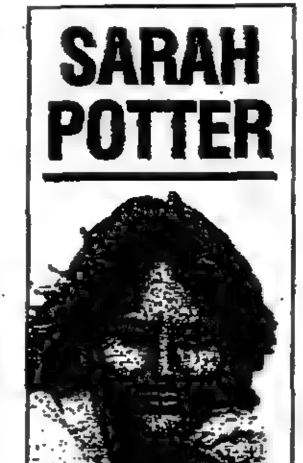
PETER BYRNE



Wheel of fortune: Moseley's rising reputation has earned her a lucrative deal with one of the biggest teams in mountain biking, Volvo Cannondale UK

Moseley plots a downhill course

Signing for a leading mountain bike team has put a young British woman on the right route to success



The fat tubes and titanium nuts of the downhill mountain bikes are not yet welcome at the Olympic Games — unlike their cross-country cousins — but it is a fast-growing sport, big on glamour and money, with speed and drama guaranteed. This Saturday, in Cheddar, Somerset, another national downhill season gets under way.

Many more men than women have taken to the hills where, on courses that vary from three to eight minutes, speeds approaching 50mph test nerve as well as strength. A handful of women, though, are now skidding to the forefront, where they are able to earn a living from a sport still only a couple of decades old.

One such is Tracy Moseley, 19, from Malvern, who rode her first race five years ago and who, as a second-year biology student at Sheffield University, has signed a contract with one of the biggest teams, Volvo Cannondale UK. In doing so, she has become the envy of her older brother, Ed.

"He's ranked in Britain's top ten for men's downhill," Moseley said. "Because there are only about 30 women who race in the national events, compared to more than 200 men, it's easier for the top girls to get sponsorship. Ed is always supportive towards me, but it must be hard for him because I've come along and got his dream first."

Moseley likened her contract to signing schoolboy football forms. "It starts off with enough to survive," she said.

"For me it means that I don't have to worry about working while I'm studying, because I'm getting a salary as if I was a professional. I get all my bikes and equipment, clothing and travel expenses, so I can compete in the world series and championships." Which will, during the summer months, send her zigzagging her across Europe and the United States.

If she can improve on her couple of top-ten placings last season, the financial rewards could be high. "That's where you get into the big time," she said. "The best British guys would be on £60,000 to £80,000 a year and some of the top women I know have been asking £20,000."

It was the generosity of one of the elite British women, Helen Mortimer, that initially helped Moseley on her way. "I'd just started racing and had very little kit," Moseley said. "I was in my shorts and T-shirt when Helen came up to me and offered to lend me her bike from the previous season. She's one of the top racers in the world and it was amazing, someone like that giving me that amount of help."

Mortimer had spotted a talent worth encouraging, though she could be forgiven for ruing her judgment when Moseley beat her for the first time last season. Now, with a custom-built Cannondale worth in excess of £4,000 beneath her, the new kid on the block hopes to shave yet more seconds from her race times.

Even with full body protection, hurtling down the high-speed slopes — dodging trees and jumping rocks — claims plenty of broken bones, but it has also built a few larger-than-life personalities. Missy "The Missile" Giove was, up until this season, the spearhead of the Volvo Cannondale team. The American is the most famous woman in the sport and reputedly earned $500,000 (about £310,000) last year alone.

"It's a very social sport, anyway," Moseley said. "But Missy has always given me lots of help. Although she's not the top-ranked woman any more, she's got a past and personality that will always attract attention."

That past meant delivering Chinese food in New York to help to fund sporting passions that included snowboarding and surfing. Moseley's route into downhill racing has been more sedate. "I was brought up on a farm so my main job was milking the cows," she said. "I've worked in a boarding kennels, walking the dogs to earn extra money, but that's about it."

Any spare time now is spent training for a sporting career that, like the event itself, is over all too quickly. "I definitely want to give it my all once I've finished university," she said. "But it'll probably only last three or four years."

Whether the sport can sustain its rapid growth remains to be seen. "Bike manufacturers have put huge amounts of money into it," Moseley said, "but I do wonder if it's getting to the stage where it can't go much further. I don't worry about that because being paid is a bonus. I could ride downhill all day, because I love it."

SQUASH

Potters Bar shrug off cash fears with victory

By Colin MacQuillan

POTTERS BAR, the poor relations of the Squash Rackets Association National Squash League, have battled through to their fourth consecutive semi-final with a 3-2 home win over Chichester that featured all but one of the players who first formed their squad in 1996.

Twice winners of the league, the Hertfordshire side are struggling financially after losing a sponsor last year and then facing an attack on their membership from a new local health club offering discount joining fees.

An emergency meeting of loyal members and players resulted in a determination to stay in the league. "The players agreed to back the club by taking reduced fees and even delaying payment until the members could organise summer events if there was a short-fall on ticket sales," Tochi Bhatt, the team manager, said. "It seems to have bred an even greater resistance to defeat than existed before".

The quarter-final showed the team's determination after Iain Higgins went down in straight games at second string to Ben Garner and Paul Carter, the Potters Bar team captain and new British over-35 champion, failed to match the speedy Tim Vail.

Jamie Davis dragged the home side back into contention with a 9-15, 15-6, 15-11, 15-5 third-string win over Mike Harris and Sue Wright contributed to the women's fifth string with a 9-6, 9-7, 9-6 win over Stephanie Brind.

The players were in similar battling form when they took the title in 1996 and 1997, but the deciding match fell to Mark Cairns, the England No 3. He won the quarter-final 15-7, 15-3, 15-12 against Peter Genever at first string.

The first leg of the semi-finals on March 30 will take Potters Bar to Nottingham, who defeated Edgbaston Priory 4-1 in their quarter-final. The second semi-final is between UK Packaging, of Chingford, who overcame Devon and Exeter 5-0, and UNW Northumberland, of Newcastle, who won 3-2 against UniS Guilford.



By Robert Sheehan, bridge correspondent

The effect of the opening lead on the play of the hand can be quite extraordinary even if it does nothing whatsoever to help either side establish any winners. Take a look at this deal from the American Blue Ribbon Pairs and consider the play in Six No-Trumps, usually reached after South opened an optimistic 15-17 One No-Trump.

Dealer East N-S game Pairs

North: ♠ K1075 ♡ KQ92 ◇ AQ ♣ K74

West: ♠ 984 ♡ 7654 ◇ 6532 ♣ 108

East: ♠ A63 ♡ J108 ◇ J1094 ♣ QJ3

South: ♠ QJ2 ♡ A3 ◇ K87 ♣ A9652

S	W	N	E
–	–	–	Pass
1 NT	Pass	2 C	Pass
2 D	Pass	6 NT	All Pass

Contract: Six No-Trumps by South. Lead: ?

Superficially it does not seem to matter what West leads – nothing appears to be any help to declarer at all. But look what happened.

The declarers who received a spade lead knocked out the ace and cashed all the spade and diamond winners before testing the hearts. Of course, if the same hand had held length in hearts and clubs he would have been squeezed. If not, the residual chance, that someone holds the jack and ten of hearts in a two- or three-card suit, comes in. Six No-Trumps makes

That looks straightforward enough, does it not? But at more than one table, West led a heart against Six No-Trumps. The six of hearts is a difficult spot card to read – perhaps it could be from J1076. Although I think declarer should get it right, at least one declarer put in the nine of hearts at trick one and later regretted it.

Even if declarer passes the first test and plays low on the opening lead, South might be further tested by a crafty East, who can put in the jack of hearts and create an illusion of a finesse later on against the ten of hearts.

This sort of position, where a defender plays the higher of touching honours to persuade declarer into a losing finesse, comes up more often than is realised. Keep a look out for it when you can see that it is declarer and not your partner who may be fooled.



By Raymond Keene
Chess correspondent

Up and down

Today, in completing all of the decisive games from the Linares tournament, I give a win and a loss by the talented Ukranian grandmaster Vassily Ivanchuk. At one time Ivanchuk was considered a future world champion and, indeed, he seemed capable of scoring wins against Kasparov. Ivanchuk, however, has a nervous disposition that often holds him back from achieving his maximum potential.

White: Peter Svidler
Black: Vassily Ivanchuk
Linares 1999

French Defence

1	e4	e6
2	d4	d5
3	Nc3	Bb4
4	e5	c5
5	a3	Bxc3+
6	bxc3	Ne7
7	Qg4	Qc7
8	Qxg7	Rg8
9	Qxh7	cxd4
10	Ne2	Nbc6
11	f4	Bd7
12	Qd3	dxc3
13	Rb1	0-0-0
14	Nxc3	Na5
15	g3	Kb8
16	Ne2	Ba4
17	c3	Nf5
18	Bh3	d4
19	Bd2	Nb3
20	Bxf5	dxc3
21	Qxc3	Nxd2
22	Qxc7+	Kxc7
23	Rc1+	Bc6
24	Bh3	Kb6
25	Rxc6+	bxc6
26	Kf2	c5
27	Bg2	c4
28	h4	Nb3
29	h5	Rd2
30	Ke3	Ra2
31	h6	Rxa3
32	h7	Rh8
33	Nc3	Ka5
34	Ne4	Nc5+
35	Ke2	Nxe4
36	Bxe4	Rxg3
37	Rb1	Rh3
38	Kd2	Rd8+
39	Kc2	Rd4

White resigns

Diagram of final position

White: Peter Leko
Black: Vassily Ivanchuk
Linares 1999

Sicilian Defence

1	e4	c5
2	Nf3	Nc6
3	d4	cxd4
4	Nxd4	e6
5	Nb5	d6
6	Bf4	e5
7	Be3	Be7
8	N1c3	Nf6
9	Bg5	a6
10	Bxf6	gxf6
11	Na3	f5
12	exf5	Nd4
13	Nc4	Bxf5
14	Bd3	Be6
15	0-0	Rc8
16	Ne3	d5
17	Qh5	e4
18	Be2	Nxe2+
19	Nxe2	d4
20	Nf5	Rc5
21	Ng7+	Kd7
22	Nxe6	Rxh5
23	Nxd8	Rxd8
24	Rad1	Kc7
25	Rxd4	Rxd4
26	Nxd4	Bf6
27	c3	Ra5
28	f3	Bxd4+
29	cxd4	e3
30	a3	Rb5
31	b4	a5
32	bxa5	Kd6
33	Re1	Rb3
34	Kf1	Rxa3
35	Ke2	Rxa5
36	Kxe3	Ra2
37	Rb1	Rxg2
38	Rxb7	Rxh2
39	Rxf7	h5
40	Ke4	Black resigns

WORD-WATCHING

By Philip Howard

CARBONARI
a. Fishy pasta
b. Fishy conspirators
c. Fish

CITRUL
a. A bullfighter's sword
b. A melon
c. Popular rule by citizens

CROMORNE
a. A geological era
b. Cock-crow
c. An organ stop

CASTOR
a. The gladiator with a net
b. A religious singer
c. The beaver

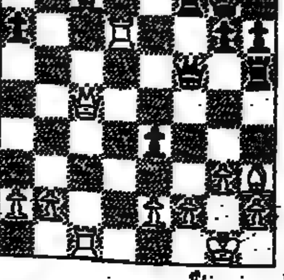
Answers on page 54

WINNING MOVE

By Raymond Keene

White to play. This position is from the game Burmakin-Guliev, St Petersburg 1998. Can you spot White's fine combination, which allowed him to exploit the slight weakness in Black's back row?

Answers on page 54



GOLF

Westwood and Clarke begin Masters build-up

FROM JOHN HOPKINS, GOLF CORRESPONDENT, IN ORLANDO

FLORIDA is glorious in March. The blossom is just beginning to emerge and the air is clean and dry. Combine the attractions of the Orange State at this season with a tournament hosted by Arnold Palmer, held on an excellent golf course, and it becomes clear why the field for the Bay Hill Invitational, starting today, is one of the strongest for a strokeplay event so far this year.

Perhaps, though, the appeal of Disney World, Universal Studios and some remarkably cheap shopping have something to do with it as well.

Tiger Woods is competing in his sixth strokeplay tournament of the year, and his first for a month. And so he should. He lives nearby and the journey from home to tee may be the shortest he has to make to compete all year. After dispensing with the services of Mike "Fluff" Cowan in February, Woods is unveiling his new caddie, Steve Williams, a New Zealander who is a former professional and has carried for Greg Norman and Ray Floyd.

Other caddies on the tour describe him as highly professional and one who keeps himself to himself. Cowan's burgeoning status as a celebrity, who appeared on television commercials, may have been the last straw in his relationship with Woods.

Colin Montgomerie, who finished 38th at a tournament in Fort Lauderdale last week, has made the short journey north and is joined by Lee Westwood and Darren Clarke, who were last seen competing in the World Golf Championship at La Costa in California three weeks ago. Westwood, ranked sixth in the world, had no difficulty in getting an invitation but he made a personal plea to Palmer for a place for his friend Clarke. For them, this is the start of their build-up to the Masters, which begins three weeks today.

There are, seemingly, thousands of Britons in town but Sandy Lyle is not one of them, though he could have been. Lyle and Florida have had a chequered relationship, the high point of which came in 1987 when he defeated Jeff Sluman in the Tournament Players' Championship.

It was about this time that Lyle accidentally took a wrong turning while driving north. Realising his mistake, he drove on expecting to see an exit road. It did not appear for ten miles, nor for 20, nor for 50 nor for 80. Alligator Alley, the road he was on, is the only one in Florida that has no turn-offs. It links the east and west coasts and you get on it and off it at each end, not at points along the way. Lyle, poor soul, had to drive over 100 miles in the wrong direction before he was able to do anything about it.

These days he is living somewhat hand-to-mouth in terms of tournaments. He played in Arizona at a tournament that coincided with the La Costa event and last week got an entry to the Honda Classic, in which he finished seventeenth. Sadly, though, he did not acquaint himself with the rules for this week's tournament.

Had he done so, or perhaps more to the point, had his manager done so, it would have become clear that as a past winner of a major championship held during the lifetime of the Bay Hill event, he would have been eligible. This is, after all, an invitational.

LINKS

WEBSITE: www.pgatour.com — official US tour site

TELEVISION: Sky Sports 2, 9pm today, live action



Sorenstam sets standard

FROM PATRICIA DAVIES IN PHOENIX, ARIZONA

THE message for contestants in the Standard Register Ping tournament, which begins at Moon Valley here today, is clear: Watch out, Annika's about.

Annika Sorenstam, the world No 1, is back, relaxed, after a four-week break. "I'm in grinding mood again," the Swede said. She has been skiing, working out, practising hard at the Callaway complex in San Diego with Henri Ries, her coach — "we had a million things to work on" — and perfecting her lotus position.

Yoga is a new venture for Sorenstam, 28. A year ago she was drained by the demands on her time, satisfied with what she had achieved, and perhaps lacking a little oomph. She was still No 1 on the United States money list for the third time in four years, player of the year for the third time in four years, and winner of the Vare Trophy for the third time in four years, with the lowest scoring average ever, 69.99.Now she is ready to grind again. Heaven help the rest.

Alison Nicholas and Catrin Nilsmark, both now coached by Martin Hall, husband of Lisa Hackney, their Solheim Cup team-mate, are also reappearing after a break.

Nicholas, who won in Hawaii and then had the lowest round of her career, a 64, in Australia, was confined to the driving range at home in Birmingham because most courses were waterlogged. She is, however, fit and well after last season and full of confidence again, unlike Laura Davies, the winner here from 1994 to 1997 inclusive, whose putting continues to drive her barmy.



Westwood will be hoping to get his game in good order before the challenge of Augusta

BOWLS

Scotland look too strong for rivals

BY DAVID RHYS JONES

SCOTLAND, the defending champions, will meet England, their traditional rivals, in what amounts to a knockout encounter for the British women's indoor title at Belfast today, while the host country seems destined to take the wooden spoon.

The Scots, with three newcomers and two recalled players in their ranks, met little opposition from Wales yesterday and, with a handsome victory over Ireland already under their belts, are hotly tipped to win the Clara Johns Trophy for the sixteenth time.

England, who won on five of the six rinks, defeated Ireland 129-83 and Scotland raced to a 135-103 win over Wales, returning four winning cards.

Eyebrows continue to be raised at the way that rinks are drawn at random, because, although there are six rinks to choose from, players can find themselves rolling up on the same ground they got to know the day before.

Thus it was that Jean Sykes, from Auchinleck, was allowed to repeat her previous day's success on rink 6, where she had put 34 shots across Joyce Mulholland. Her eyes lit up when the draw was announced and with Julie Forrest, Scotland's Commonwealth Games singles representative, operating well at lead, she proceeded to steer her quartet to another big win, this time 28-13 over Ann Dainton's luckless Welsh team.

Previous knowledge of a rink is not always an advantage, of course. Earlier, Jayne Roylance's face was a picture of gloom when she realised she would have to endure another four hours on rink 6. Having lost to a Welsh rink skipped by Maureen Tanner on Tuesday, she fared better, scoring a single on the 21st end to break a 13-13 deadlock and beat an Irish rink skipped by Dessa Baird, 14-13.

Eileen Bell, who is challenging to break the late Mavis Steele's world record as the most capped woman bowler, was recalled to the Irish side, and helped Chrissie O'Gorman to a creditable 19-17 win over Di Hunt.

SPORT IN BRIEF

Fears over World Cup ticket fraud

■ **RUGBY UNION:** Organisers of the 1999 Rugby World Cup have voiced concern over potential black market ticket sales. Patrick Deuchar, the chief executive of Rugby Hospitality '99, has warned that the competition must avoid the pitfalls of the football World Cup last year.

"Bitter experience has taught us that large international sporting events provide rich pickings for unscrupulous touts with large mouths and empty promises," Deuchar said. "During France 98, many agencies went bust leaving clients without tickets, refunds or redress, with an estimated £12 million being owed to UK companies."

■ **CRICKET:** Paddy McKeown scored 59 as Lancashire reached 205 for seven before declaring in the opening three-day fixture of their pre-season tour of South Africa against Western Province Acadamy in Cape Town. Ian Austin, who came through a World Cup fitness test last week, played for the Academy team and took one for 24 in 13 overs with no reaction to the knee injury that troubled him last season. The Academy made 40 without loss in reply.

■ **HOCKEY:** The Army defeated the Royal Navy 4-0 in the Services Championship at Aldershot yesterday to regain the Wilkinson Sword, a special prize for hockey matches between these teams. Fordham opened the scoring early in the second half and further goals were added after the interval by Tapp, Jennings, from a penalty stroke, and Relph from a short corner.

■ **GOLF:** The richest prize in the history of the European women's tour will be played for at the Evian Masters in France from June 9-12. A winner's cheque of £102,500 is more than all but two players, Helen Alfredsson and Sophie Gustafson, of Sweden, earned on the circuit last season. The total purse of £689,000 makes the tournament the fifth most lucrative in the women's game.

HOCKEY

University's five titles

LOUGHBOROUGH University enjoyed a fine day in the Busa Halifax Hockey finals at the Milton Keynes National Stadium, winning five of the six titles (Tim Gallico writes).

Loughborough men's first XI upset Brunel West London 5-4, but enjoyed an easier game in the men's second-XI final, beating Durham 2-0.

Loughborough women's first XI secured their fifth successive championship with a 4-1 win over the University of Birmingham. The second XI team beat Cambridge 4-0, while the third XI were held 1-1 by the University of Wales, Institute Cardiff, before winning the title 4-1 on penalty flicks.

CRICKET

Sussex consider a move

BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

SUSSEX will decide before the end of the year whether to stay at Hove, their home for the last 127 years. Tony Pigott, their chief executive, said yesterday that the committee would make the decision as soon as possible as the County Ground was "falling down around us".

Pigott said that the county would be "absolutely crazy" not to look at all their options, and that any redevelopment of Hove would take at least ten years. "We can't say if we're staying at Hove or going at this stage," he said. "We are looking at all kinds of things at the moment.

"Whatever we do, we'll take it to the members with a proposal and ultimately they will make the decision."

Sachin Tendulkar, the India batsman, is likely to miss the one-day series against Pakistan and Sri Lanka because of a back injury, but he will be fit for the World Cup. The series starts tomorrow and ends on April 4.

Tendulkar, 25, returned home yesterday after consulting a British orthopaedic surgeon. "I have been advised to take two weeks' rest," he said. "The back is still stiff and the doctor has prescribed some exercises. It should be OK soon."

Tendulkar may be brought back for the Champions Trophy against England and Pakistan in Sharjah from April 7 to 16. The Sharjah tournament will be India's last international engagement before the World Cup starts in England on May 14.

Tendulkar rushed back from England a week ahead of schedule to see his father, who is recovering from heart trouble in a Bombay hospital.

Ashley Giles, the England slow left-arm bowler, has been given the all-clear to go on Warwickshire's pre-season tour of South Africa. Giles had an injection in his left heel after he returned from the one-day series in Australia but managed to pass a fitness test at Edgbaston.

FOR THE RECORD

BASKETBALL

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION (NBA): Indiana 79 Atlanta 85, Cleveland 86 Detroit 87, Miami 94 Washington 85, New York 113 Los Angeles Clippers 80, Minnesota 101 Los Angeles Lakers 107, Toronto 100 New Jersey 85, Milwaukee 92 Phoenix 110, Houston 94 Portland 86, Seattle 87 Vancouver 85, Sacramento 109 San Antonio 121

BOWLS

BELFAST: Women's home international indoor championship: Scotland bt Ireland 165-102, England bt Ireland 129-83, Scotland bt Wales 135-103

GOLF

SUNNINGDALE FOURSOMES: Second round: Men competitors: F Brown (Hoswall) and B Merran (Monmouth) bt D Clee and A Pearson (Wharton Park) 2 and 1; K Staunton and C Scotland (Woodcote Park) bt J Head and S Head (Goodwood) 1 hole; J Higgins (Pannal Park Hotel) and M McGuire (Stoneleigh Park) bt C Gold and S Hill (The Berkshire) 2 and 1; M Plumber (Castle Coombe) and I Harrison (Ross-on-Wye) bt S Robinson and E Dungleby (Malton and Norton) 1 hole; A Boatman (Royal Worlington) and C Manson (Sunningdale) bt M Searle and P Lawrence (Woodbury Park) 1 hole; J Putt (Sunningdale) and N Mansell (Woodbury Park) bt M Selby and M Palmer (St George's Hill) 2 and 1; N Hansen and D Parris (North Foreland) bt A Robertson (Sunningdale) and A Northridge (Wentworth) 1 up; D March and W Dicks (Rogment Way) bt B Sandys and G Harris (Broom Manor) 1 up; D Honam and L James (East Dorset) bt L Atkinson and L Rusher (Stoke Poges) 5 and 4; A Carey and J Hemphill (Walmley) bt R Crowley and S Elliott (Henbury) 2 and 1; S Whiffin (Enfield) and S Khan (Tooting Hill) bt C Rosko (Gerrards Cross) and J Wells (Beverley and ER) 1 up; M Palmer (Mill Ride) and R McFarlane (PGAET) bt J King and J Wood (Limerick) 3 and 1; M Jones (Bolton Open) and C Maroney (unattached) bt G Hughes (Petersfield) and J Lovell (Brokenhurst Manor) 3 and 1; L Walters (Chevin) and R McEvoy (Thorpe Hill) bt C Fielding and M Deal (Enfield) 4 and 3; S Downton and N Ridewood (Orsett) bt A Tillman (Wildernesse) and K Will (Knole Park) 5 and 3; A Wainwright (Garforth) and A Ambler (Malton Golf Centre) bt S Russell and D Lomas (Woodcote Park) 4 and 3

OLD COURSE: B Mitchell and K Grice (South Herts) bt G Evans (Ealing) and T Andersen (Moor Park) 1 up; S Mair (Letham Grange) and E Wilson (Forfar) bt G Harris (Trent Park) and G Evans (North Middlesex) 1 hole; G Sherry (Loch Lomond) and R Thornton (Cardross) bt O Lindsay (Royal Burgess GS) and B Pirn (Woburn) 2 up; T Paterson (Leatherhead) and R Goudie (Epsom) bt R Furnack and C Fogden (Bognor Regis) 1 up; T Markwick (South Winchester) and I Roper (Corhampton) bt J P Langmead and G D Langmead (Hele Park) 1 hole; S Little and J Ambridge (Moor Park) bt L Owens (Royal Dublin) and N Fox (Port Marnock) 1 hole; R Bovall (Trevose) and D A Cooper (Birchwood) bt T Wheals (Maylands) and R Joyce (West Essex) 3 and 1; M Side (Shirley Park) and D Clarke (Richmond) bt C Tucker and S Mantell (Mannings Heath) 4 and 3; S Andrew and K Andrew (Clitheroe) bt M Landsborough and A Smith (Royal Ashdown Forest) 6 and 5; D Cupsey (Coulsdon Manor) and J Edwards (Knole Park) bt W Dowdale (Sunningdale) and M Briggs (Stoke Poges) 4 and 3; W Salthouse and Y Ali (Ealing) bt P Tupling and A McNabola (Sand Moor) 4 and 2; B Tye (Burnley) and G Bown (Ganton) bt A Good and R Summerscales (Fordham) 2 and 1; M Pile (Woburn) and A Hodges (Stinchcombe Hill) wo S East (Moortown) and J Mixer (Fulford); P Creamer (Chiddingfold) and C Cowper (Jack Nicklaus Golf Centre) bt K Smith and J Hay (Waterlooville) 1 hole; C Gane (Hazelwood) and N Reilly (Surbiton) bt M Thompson (Canford Magna) and M Watson (Weymouth) 4 and 3; B McColl and S Shields (Thorpe Hall) bt S Griffiths (Wentworth) and M Wilcox (unattached) 2 up

THIRD ROUND: Staunton and Scotland bt Brown and Morgan 2 holes; Plumber and Harrison bt Higgins and McGuire 2 and 1; Boatman and Manson bt Putt and N Mansell 1 up; Hansen and Parris bt March and Dicks 5 and 4; Palmer and McFarlane bt Whiffin and Khan 3 and 2; Walters and McEvoy bt Jones and Maroney 4 and 3; Wainwright and Ambler bt Downton and Ridewood 3 and 1; Mair and Wilson bt Mitchell and Grice at 19th; Paterson and Goudie bt Sherry and Thornton 3 and 2; Markwick and Roper bt Little and Ambridge at 24th; Side and Clarke bt Bovall and Cooper at 19th; Copsey and Edwards bt Andrew and Andrew at 19th; Salthouse and Ali bt Tye and Bown 4 and 3; Creamer and Cowper bt Pile and Hodges 7 and 6; McColl and Shields bt Gane and Reilly 4 and 3

HOCKEY

ALDERSHOT: Services championships: Veterans: Army 2 Royal Navy 1. **Juniors:** Army 8 Royal Navy 1. **Seniors:** Army 4 Royal Navy 0. **Women:** RAF 2 Royal Navy 0

MILTON KEYNES: BUSA Halifax championships: Finals: Men: First XI: Loughborough University 5 Brunel West London 4. **Second XI:** Loughborough 2 Durham 0. **Third XI:** Durham 2 Birmingham 0. **Women: First XI:** Loughborough 4 Birmingham 1. **Second XI:** Loughborough 4 Cambridge 0. **Third XI:** Loughborough 1 UWIC 1 (Loughborough win 4-1 on pens)

ICE HOCKEY

NATIONAL LEAGUE (NHL): Pittsburgh 2 Dallas 2; Nashville 2 Calgary 4; St Louis 5 Philadelphia 2

SAILING

CLIPPER ROUND-THE-WORLD RACE: Leg 3c (Shanghai to Hong Kong, with miles to finish): 1, Ariel (A Thomson) 541; 2, Chrysolite (T Hedges) 542; 3, Antiope (K Harris) 546, equal 4, Taeping (N Fleming) and Senca (R Dean) 547; 6, Memerus (B Sollars) 559; 7, Thermopylae (M Tod) 570

SCHOOLS SPORT

RUGBY UNION: Stonyhurst sevens: Under-16: Semi-finals: Hymers 21 Oratory 7; Sedbergh 42 Stonyhurst 5. **Final:** Sedbergh 22 Hymers 7. **Under-11: Final:** St Mary's Hall, Stonyhurst 10 Merchant Taylors' Liverpool 5

SQUASH

SRA NATIONAL LEAGUE: Quarter-finals: Capital One Nottingham 4 Edgbaston Priory 1 (S Parke bt D Harris 15-6, 9-15, 15-3, 15-13; D Evans lost to S Boswell 10-15, 17-14, 8-15, 10-15; L Beachill bt B Ball 15-14, 15-9, 15-10; J Nicolle bt C Leach 11-15, 15-8, 15-7, 7-15, 15-10; N Grainger bt F Geaves 9-5, 9-3, 9-1). **Potters Bar 3 Aspect Chichester 2** (M Cairns bt P Genever 15-7, 15-3, 15-12; I Higgins lost to B Garner 5-15, 15-17, 10-15; J Davis bt M Harris 9-15, 15-6, 15-11, 15-5; P Carter lost to T Vail 13-15, 11-15, 12-15; S Wright bt S Brind 9-6, 9-7, 9-0). **Dunlop Guildford 2 UNW Northumberland 3** (P Johnson bt C Walker 15-13, 15-10, 15-9; S Meads lost to T Hands 13-15, 15-3, 15-13, 2-15, 4-15; J Russell lost to J Dale 8-15, 12-15, 10-15; A Grant bt P Millington 15-12, 15-12, 15-12; L Stephens lost to J Martin 0-9, 0-9, 2-9). **UK Packaging 5 Devon and Exeter 0** (T Garner bt H Staff 15-7, 15-10, 15-1; J Wellings bt D Bradbury 8-15, 15-12, 15-6, 15-7; S Cowie bt G Davies 15-8, 15-3, 11-15, 15-10; L Jemmett bt M Greenslade 15-6, 15-12, 15-14; L Charman bt T Martin 5-9, 9-7, 9-1, 9-3)

NATIONAL SUPER LEAGUE: Le Sport Colwyn Bay 1 Ellis Stockbrokers Lingfield 2 (N Taylor lost to P Johnson 3-9, 5-9, 5-9; P Lord lost to T Hands 7-9, 8-10, 7-9; P Whitlock bt T Garner 9-6, 9-3, 3-9, 7-9, 9-5)

POOLS DIVIDENDS

BRITTENS: Treble chance: 22pts £1,021.37, 21 £730, 20. **Four draws:** £14.50. **Five aways:** £3.30. **Eight homes:** £27.90

LITTLEWOODS: Treble chance: 23pts £574,566, 22 £1,894.30, 21 £87.05, 20 £15.95. **Half-time results dividend:** £152.40. **Four draws:** £38.10. **Nine homes:** £381.05. **Five aways:** £3.90

VERNONS: Treble chance: 22pts £5,962.50, 21 £48.30, 20 £9.05

ZETTERS: Treble chance: 23pts £36,350.56, 22 £61.30, 21 £7.00, 20 £0.90. **Four aways:** £1.00. **Eight homes:** £610.10. **Four draws:** £26.20. **Easy abc:** £8.00. **All-draws treble chance:** 23pts £16.30, 22 £0.30. **Lucky numbers:** 11 34 31 18 16 4

FIXTURES

FOOTBALL

Kick-off 7.30 unless stated

Cup Winners' Cup

Quarter-finals, second leg

Lazio (4) v Panionios (0) (7.45)

Maccabi Haifa (0) v Lokomotiv Moscow (3) (4.30)

Real Mallorca (0) v Varteks (0)

Valerenga (0) v Chelsea (3)

DR MARTENS LEAGUE: Southern division: St Leonards v Ashford

UNIBOND LEAGUE: Challenge Cup: Fourth round: Accrington Stanley v Gurzeley

RYMAN LEAGUE: Second division: Bracknell v Met Police. **Vandanel Trophy: Fourth round:** Leighton Town v Wivenhoe; Southall v Marlow; Windsor and Eton v Edgware. **Puma Cup: Fourth round:** Worthing v Carshalton.

PONTIN'S LEAGUE: Third division: Wigan v Scunthorpe (2.0)

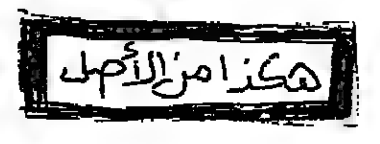
FAI HARP NATIONAL LEAGUE: Premier division: Bohemians v Bray (7.45); Dundalk v Derry (7.45)

MINERVA SPARTAN SOUTH MIDLANDS LEAGUE: Premier division: London Colney v Harpenden; Somersett Ambury v Ruislip Manor; Welwyn Garden v Haringey

OTHER SPORT

HOCKEY: Women's home nations tournament (at DISC, Dundee): **Under-18:** Scotland v Wales (3.30); England v Ireland (5.15). **Under-16:** Scotland v Wales (12.0); Ireland v England (1.45)

ICE HOCKEY: Sekonda play-off championship: Group A: Sheffield Steelers v London Knights (7.30)



FOOTBALL

Ginola puts his case in writing

By Nick Szczepanik

MEMBERS of the Football Writers' Association recently received their voting forms for the Footballer of the Year Award. For many watching the game at Oakwell on Tuesday evening, their decision was made for them by David Ginola's extraordinary winning goal against Barnsley, which put Tottenham Hotspur through to an FA Cup semi-final against Newcastle United, Ginola's former club.

Admittedly, Dwight Yorke, another leading contender for the award, has scored many more goals, but Ginola's have the edge in sheer spectacle, and his cup form is all the more remarkable when he was considered a likely casualty of the arrival of George Graham as manager. Instead, he has thrived as Tottenham have advanced to one final, the Worthington Cup meeting with Leicester City at Wembley on Sunday, and now to within one match of another.

"It was typical Ginola," Graham said of his 69th-minute goal against Barnsley, which saw the Frenchman escape the attentions of Nicky Eaden, who had subdued him for most of the first half, before dribbling past Clayton Blackmore, Robin Van Der Laan and Arjan de Zeeuw and hitting a low shot past Tony Bullock. "He can be quiet for 45 minutes and then come alight. How people, even from the opposition, cannot admire his skill is unbelievable."

If there were boos at Barnsley, they were prompted by Ginola's perceived part in the dismissal of Adie Moses, the Barnsley central defender, ten minutes before the goal. Mike Reed, the referee, showed Moses a yellow card for pulling back Ginola, then a second, within a minute, for a foul on Les Ferdinand. John Hendrie, the Barnsley manager, believed that the dismissal had turned the game.

"Our game plan was to keep Ginola quiet, and Adie Moses contributed to that. The second decision was a booking but certainly the first one wasn't. Reed has cost us a chance of the semi-finals of the FA Cup, without a doubt."

Yesterday, Philip Don, the Premier League referees' officer, came to the defence of Reed, who has been no stranger to controversy. "Fifa is looking for consistency," Don said. "There are still times when the referee can use commonsense, but there are times when foul tackles go in that he has to apply the mandatory instructions. Managers and players have to accept that. If the referee is being consistent, then he's not bothered whether it's a first or second bookable offence."

Graham now has a chance to equal his feat of 1993 when he managed Arsenal to victory in both domestic cup competitions. "As long as we're in the cups there is a possibility, but I'm not even thinking about it," Graham said. "I was pleased with the players last night because the way they approached the game was right." For Ginola, a further double is possible: Footballer of the Year and Goal of the Season.


Ginola: brilliant goal


Laurent Blanc, the Marseilles captain, embraces Stephane Porato, the goalkeeper, after their aggregate defeat of Celta Vigo

Atletico ruin Italian takeover plan

By Our Sports Staff

ITALIAN clubs may have made the Uefa Cup something of their own property, but their hopes of achieving another landmark were dashed when Atlético Madrid came from a goal down to eliminate AS Roma and put an end to the prospect of a record three teams from Serie A appearing in the semi-finals.

Teams from Italy have won the trophy seven times in the past ten years and they went into the quarter-final, second-leg matches on Tuesday hoping for success for Parma, Bologna and Roma. The first two duly got through, but Atlético struck a blow for Spain when they came from behind to win 2-1 for a 4-2 aggregate success.

Roma, who had taken the lead through Marco Delvecchio, were beaten by goals from Carlos Aguilera and Roberto Fresnedoso and ended the match with only nine men, Pierre Woma having been sent off in the 28th minute and Francesco Totti following him at the end.

Bologna almost followed them out. Leading 3-0 from the home leg, their advantage was all but wiped out within 39 minutes in Lyons and they were later indebted to the woodwork before the French team, who had Florent Laville sent off four minutes from time, bowed out.

No such trouble for Parma, who crushed Bordeaux 6-0 for a 7-2 aggregate victory thanks to two goals apiece by Crespo and Chiesa.

The hopes of another Spanish team were dashed as Celta Vigo, who had beaten Aston Villa and Liverpool so impressively in previous rounds, became the most surprising casualties of the night. Trailing 2-1 to Olympique Marseilles from the first leg, they were expected to recover the deficit, but Laurent Blanc and Pierre Issa, the Marseilles defenders, were outstanding as the French team held out for a goalless draw despite the best efforts of Alexander Mostovoi, the Russian winger, who was a constant threat.

The draw for the semi-finals will be made in Zurich tomorrow, with the ties taking place on April 6 and 20. The final will be played in Moscow on May 12.

Palace's £2 million debt to Venables

By Our Sports Staff

TERRY VENABLES is still owed £2 million by Crystal Palace, it was revealed last night as the struggling club admitted its dire financial plight.

Palace, who play in the Nationwide League first division, have been forced to call in administrators as the money owed to Venables, the former England coach, is only a fraction of their debts of £22 million, and they are losing a further £500,000 every month.

The club has assets worth £13 million and Mark Goldberg, the chairman, who has already lost the £23 million that he paid to buy out Ron Noades last summer, has invested a further £1.5 million.

Unless Goldberg and Buchler, the administrator, can cut the huge wage bill, slash costs and attract new investment over the next three months, even their optimism will count for nothing.

Palace's future will depend on agreeing terms with a long list of creditors, which include clubs such as Aston Villa, Liverpool and Juventus, as well as banks — but, most famously, Venables and his former assistants at the club.

Venables was paid his £750,000 annual tax-free salary last summer when he took over, as well as being given a Mercedes, the use of a house, an interest-free loan and a cut of revenue from player sales.

Palace anticipate that the settlement of the four years remaining on his contract will cost them a further £2 million. Like many other creditors, however, he is expected to have to agree to part-payment or to accept shares in the club.

Goldberg said: "It is easy to say in hindsight that it was a foolish deal, although there are clubs where managers are offered similar deals and it has been a great success."

He gave warning that Palace were not alone and that the plight of the club should remind other clubs not to "chase the dream" of an instant return to the FA Carling Premiership by continuing to pay inflated salaries.

RUGBY LEAGUE

Charter aims to raise the standard

By Christopher Irvine

THE new charter agreed by coaches of the fourteen JJB Super League clubs with Greg McCallum, the Rugby Football League referees' director, will be keenly watched when it comes into operation in the match tomorrow at Headingley between Leeds Rhinos and Wigan Warriors, the grand finalists last season.

McCallum returned this season to his position after two years in Australia and found that disagreements and discrepancies were harming the smooth running of the game, particularly in the high number of penalties and professional fouls at the play-the-ball.

The charter clarifies the rules regarding the tackled player regaining his feet and making contact on the ball with his foot as it is played, and defending players not interfering with the play-the-ball process. It is intended to reduce the numbers of penalties and produce a more flowing spectacle and will be extended to the Northern Ford Premiership in the next two weeks.

"Playing standards within the whole professional game have improved considerably in the last five years and it is essential that we have a consistent approach to the rules from everybody in the sport," McCallum said.

Simon Haughton, the Wigan second row forward, faces a late fitness test and Rob Ball, a reserve team prop, who has made only one senior appearance, is on standby for a place on the bench. As Tony Smith is still recovering from an ankle injury, Mark Reber remains at scrum half in a starting line-up that is unchanged from the team that demolished Hull Sharks in Wigan's opening Super League game.

London Broncos can no longer be accused of not nurturing British talent, with four development players now in the first-team squad. Dominic Peters, 20, from Acton, makes his second full appearance in the game at Sheffield Eagles on Saturday, alongside Peter Gill, who returns from suspension, in the back row. Shane Millard is on the bench after a groin operation.

In Australia, Adrian Rainey, of Sydney Wests, is deciding whether to appeal against the validity of his positive test for a banned steroid. Rainey could challenge the Australian Sports Drug Agency's anti-doping procedures on the grounds that his sample was allegedly left unattended for what is thought to have been between 15 and 20 minutes.

Rainey was due to have appeared before the National Rugby League drugs tribunal yesterday, but received a stay of proceedings. The alleged breach in testing procedures could save him from a minimum two-year suspension.

IN BRIEF

■ BIRMINGHAM City are expected to sign David Holdsworth today from Sheffield United. The clubs have agreed a £1.25 million fee for the 30-year-old defender. Holdsworth will be offered a 4½-year contract.

■ Kasey Keller, the Leicester City goalkeeper, has delayed a decision on his future until the summer. The United States international, whose contract expires at the end of the summer, is waiting to open talks on a new deal.

■ Coventry City have taken disciplinary action against John Aloisi for a sending off that leaves Coventry facing a striker shortage for the Premiership game away to Arsenal on Saturday. Aloisi was dismissed after striking out at Danny Mills, the Charlton Athletic defender, and his three-match ban will start against Arsenal. Noel Whelan is also suspended.

■ Duncan Ferguson is on the verge of a return to action after a three-month injury lay-off. Ferguson, 27, trained with the Newcastle United squad yesterday for the first time since having surgery on a groin injury picked up on December 28. Newcastle have received a bid from Norwich City for Paul Dalglish. Bruce Rioch, the Norwich manager, has already had an approach to take the forward on loan turned down.

■ Everton are hopeful that Craig Short, their defender, will sign a new contract before the transfer deadline expires. Short, 30, is a free agent at the end of the season and Everton hope to arrange a transfer for a nominal fee if he does not agree a new deal.

■ Colchester United have signed José Antunes Fumaca, a Brazilian midfield player. He was spotted playing for Grimsby reserves.

Dundee facing disrepute charge

By Phil Gordon

DUNDEE could be charged by the Scottish Premier League (SPL) for bringing the game into disrepute following the admission that it has been involved in investment negotiations with Giovanni di Stefano, a businessman who is wanted for questioning by the United Nations for alleged war crimes.

The club is to be investigated by the SPL and Roger Mitchell, the SPL chief executive, confirmed yesterday that he has asked the Dens Park board to reveal the extent of its dealings with Di Stefano, who claims he has bought 10 per cent of Dundee's shares, worth £800,000, which would be used to help fund urgent redevelopment work at the ground.

If the SPL does not already find Di Stefano's unsavoury past unpalatable enough, then he would certainly not have impressed them yesterday when he claimed, in an interview, that President Saddam Hussein was one of his heroes.

"We have contacted Dundee to find out what is going on as we feel we must act quickly to clear this issue up," Mitchell said. "There is a clause in the SPL's articles which allows for steps to be taken against a director, employee or player who brings the league into disrepute. While Mr Di Stefano is not a director of Dundee, the spirit of the clause means that no individual should be able to bring the league into disrepute."

Peter Marr, the Dundee chief executive, has denied that any deal with Di Stefano has been finalised, but admitted he has spoken to the Anglo-Italian entrepreneur about investing in the club. Last month, the SPL gave warning to Dundee that the club faces demotion unless work is completed on new stands by July 31, but the club admits it is £1.2 million short of funding.

Di Stefano, who grew up in Northampton but moved to Belgrade a decade ago, is vice-chairman of FC Obilic, the Yugoslav champions, whose owner, Zelkjo Raznatovic, is wanted by the UN concerning alleged war crimes in Bosnia.

Raznatovic, is also allegedly wanted by police in Sweden and Belgium.

TUESDAY'S LATE RESULTS

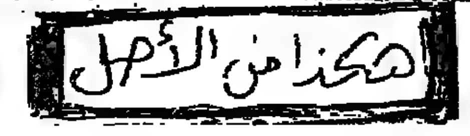
UEFA CUP: Quarter-finals, second leg: AS Roma 1 Atlético Madrid 2 (Atlético Madrid win 4-2 on agg); Celta Vigo 0 Marseilles 0 (Marseilles win 2-1 on agg). Lyons 2 Bologna 0 (Bologna win 2-3 on agg); Parma 6 Bordeaux 0 (Parma win 7-2 on agg)
FA CUP: Sixth round: Barnsley 0 Tottenham 1.
NATIONWIDE LEAGUE: First division: Bury 0 Wolverhampton 0; Crewe 0 Grimsby 0. **Second division:** Blackpool 0 Bournemouth 0; Man City 2 Notts County 1; Stoke 0 Fulham 1. **Third division:** Brentford 1 Halifax 1; Rotherham 1 Cardiff 0
AUTO WINDSCREENS SHIELD: Northern section: Final, first leg: Wigan 2 Wrexham 0. **Southern section: Final, second leg:** Walsall 1 Millwall 1 (Millwall win 2-1 on agg)
NATIONWIDE CONFERENCE: Cheltenham 0 Farnborough 0; Leek Town 0 Southport 0; Northwich 1 Doncaster 3; Rushden and Diamonds 2 Dover 2; Welling 1 Stevenage 1, Woking 0 Kettering 0.
TENNENT'S SCOTTISH CUP: Fifth-round replay: Dundee Utd 2 Ayr 1.
SCOTTISH LEAGUE: Third division: Albion 0 Montrose 0
UNIBOND LEAGUE: Premier division: Guiseley 2 Colwyn Bay 2; Lancaster 0 Altrincham 0. **First division:** Alfreton 3 Eastwood Town 0: Trafford 2 Droylsden 1 **President's Cup: Semi-final, first leg:** Leigh RMI 1 Runcorn 0. **Challenge Cup: Fourth round:** Stalybridge Celtic 5 Burscough 2.
DR MARTENS LEAGUE: Premier division: Bath 0 Worcester 0, King's Lynn 0 Bromsgrove 0; Rothwell 0 Grantham 1 **Midland division:** Bedworth 2 Evesham 1. Blakenall 1 Cinderford 0: Blorwich 0 Weston-super-Mare 1, Redditch 0 Stourbridge 1. Shepshed Dynamo 2 Hinckley 3; Stafford 6 RC Warwick 1. **Southern division:** Ashford 1 Andover 1, Bashley 2 Yate 1, Folkestone Invicta 3 Newport IoW 0; Raunds 2 Fisher 2; Witney 1 Havant and Waterlooville 1
RYMAN LEAGUE: Premier division: Aldershot Town 1 Purfleet 1: Bishop's Stortford 1 Heybridge Swifts 3; Dulwich 2 Billericay 4, Hampton 0 Enfield 2; Hendon 0 Sutton United 3. **First division:** Barton 0 Staines 0; Bognor Regis 1 Berkhamsted 3; Grays 1 Hitchin 0: Leatherhead 4 Whyteleafe 1; Maidenhead 1 Leyton Pennant 2. **Second division:** Banstead 4 Wivenhoe 1; Barking 1 Windsor and Eton 0; Edgware 1 Tooting and Mitcham 2: Hemel Hempstead 2 Bedford Town 1; Hertford 1 Northwood 3; Met Police 1 Marlow 0; Witham 1 Harlow 2: Wokingham 0 Leighton 1. **Third division:** Corinthian Casuals 0 Dorking 1: East Thurrock 2 Hornchurch 3; Egham 1 Lewes 2, Flackwell Heath 1 Epsom and Ewell 6; Kingsbury 1 Tilbury 3: Ware 3 Southall 0.
FA PREMIER ACADEMY LEAGUE: Under-19: Man City 1 Crewe 0
FA OF WALES: Premier Cup: Quarter-final: Barry 1 Merthyr 0.
WELSH CUP: Quarter-final replay: Inter Cable-Tel 3 Connah's Quay 1.
SMIRNOFF IRISH LEAGUE: Premier division: Newry 1 Omagh 1 **First division:** Limavady 1 Larne 0.
BANKS'S BREWERY LEAGUE: Premier division: Dudley Town 1 Kington 2: Tividale 2 Gornal 3; Walsall Wood 3 Wolverhampton Casuals 5, Westfields 2 Brierley Hill 0
AVON INSURANCE COMBINATION: First division: Portsmouth 0 Chelsea 1, Reading 0 Charlton 1, Swindon 1 Arsenal 0, Colchester 2 Crystal Palace 1
PONTIN'S LEAGUE: Premier division: Leeds 1 Preston 1. **First division:** Oldham 2 Sheffield Wed 2; Port Vale 0 Burnley 2. **Third division:** Halifax 1 Rochdale 2.
COURAGE COMBINED COUNTIES LEAGUE: Premier division: Chessington and Hook 2 Netherne 0, Chipstead 0 Westfield 2; Farnham 4 Walton Casuals 0; Reading 1 Cobham 1; Viking Sports 2 Raynes Park Vale 0.
NORTHERN COUNTIES EAST LEAGUE: Premier division: Glasshoughton Welfare 2 Buxton 1, Maltby MW 6 Thackley 2.
NORTH WESTERN TRAINS LEAGUE: First division: Mossley 2 Atherton LR 0, Nantwich 1 St Helens 0; Prescot Cables 1 Leek CSOB 0; Skelmersdale 2 Atherton Collieries 1; Vauxhall GM 3 Rossendale 1.
ARNOTT INSURANCE NORTHERN LEAGUE: First division: Chester-le-Street 1 Morpeth 2; Easington 0 Marske 1.
COMPLETE MUSIC HELLENIC LEAGUE: Premier division: Bicester 0 North Leigh 3; Burnham 4 Abingdon 2.
ENDSLEIGH INSURANCE MIDLAND COMBINATION: Premier division: Alveston 4 Alvechurch 0, GPT (Coventry) 3 Boldmere Swifts 0; Kings Heath 0 Highgate 2; Massey Ferguson 1 Kenilworth 2.
JEWSON LEAGUE: Premier division: Ely 1 Warboys 2; Histon 1 Soham 1, Maldon 1 Newmarket 2; Sudbury Wanderers 1 Halstead 3; Wroxham 3 Fakenham 0. **First division:** Christchurch 5 East Cowes 0.
MINERVA SPARTAN SOUTH MIDLANDS LEAGUE: Premier division: Barkingside 2 Beaconsfield Sycob 2; Hoddesdon 1 Hillingdon 0; Potters Bar 2 Islington St Mary's 1; St Margaretsbury 1 London Colney 3; Welwyn Garden 5 Brimsdown 1.
SCHWEPPES ESSEX SENIOR LEAGUE: Premier division: Basildon 0 Southend Manor 2; Hullbridge Sports 1 Brentwood 0; Saffron Walden 3 Eton Manor 3; Sawbridgeworth 2 Stansted 1.
SCREWFIX DIRECT LEAGUE: Premier division: Barnstaple 3 Bridgwater 0, Brislington 1 Bishop Sutton 0: Bristol Manor Farm 0 Melksham 2; Paulton 1 Chippenham 0; Westbury 3 Yeovil TR 2.
THE TIMES FA YOUTH CUP: Fifth round: Queens Park Rangers 2 Nottm Forest 2; York 1 West Ham 1.
UHLSPORT: UNITED COUNTIES LEAGUE: Premier division: Cogenhoe 6 Eynesbury 0: Ford Sports 0 Buckingham 1. Stotfold 2 Yaxley 1
UNIJET SUSSEX COUNTY LEAGUE: First division: Ringmer 0 Eastbourne Town 0. Wick 1 Burgess Hill 1
WINSTONLEAD KENT LEAGUE: Premier division: Erith 0 Beckenham 1: Herne Bay 0 Faversham 1.

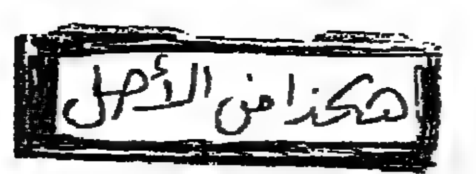
SNOW REPORTS

SKI CLUB

	Depth (cm) L	Depth (cm) U	Piste	Conditions Runs to Resort	Off/p	Weather (5pm)	C	Last snow
Andorra								
Soldeu	80	90	Good	Open	Varied	Cloud	3	15/3
Austria								
Kitzbühel	45	165	Good	Slushy	Heavy	Fine	3	11/3
Söll	70	160	Fair	Slushy	Heavy	Sun	3	7/3
St Anton	80	470	Good	Open	Spring	Sun	1	8/3
France								
Alpe d'Huez	150	340	Hard	Hard	Spring	Sun	1	8/3
Avoriaz	230	250	Fair	Slushy	Spring	Fine	4	8/3
Flaine	130	515	Good	Slushy	Varied	Sun	9	8/3
La Clusaz	65	280	Fair	Slushy	Spring	Sun	4	8/3
La Plagne	160	250	Fair	Slushy	Spring	Sun	5	8/3
La Tania	105	250	Fair	Slushy	Spring	Sun	3	8/3
Les Arcs	145	327	Fair	Open	Varied	Fine	7	8/3
Megève	90	270	Fair	Slushy	Spring	Sun	3	6/3
Méribel	80	248	Fair	Slushy	Spring	Sun	3	9/3
Tignes	148	260	Hard	Hard	Varied	Sun	1	8/3
Val Thorens	150	300	Fair	Open	Varied	Sun	1	8/3
Val d'Isère	108	300	Good	Open	Varied	Sun	2	10/3
Italy								
Cervinia	140	250	Good	Open	Crusty	Fine	1	11/3
Cortina	65	125	Fair	Worn	Spring	Sun	0	7/3
Livigno	78	197	Fair	Open	Varied	Fine	2	8/3
Switzerland								
Davos	145	295	Good	Open	Varied	Sun	[illegible]	7/3
Grindelwald	30	250	Good	Open	Heavy	Fine	3	6/3
Klosters	90	290	Good	Open	Varied	Sun	2	9/3
Murren	90	350	Good	Open	Spring	Fine	4	6/3
Saas Fee	80	215	Hard	Slushy	Spring	Sun	5	11/3
St Moritz	70	120	Good	Hard	Varied	Fine	3	6/3
Verbier	80	185	Hard	Slushy	Spring	Sun	6	11/3
Villars	50	220	Good	Hard	Spring	Sun	3	8/3
Wengen	70	150	Good	Open	Spring	Fine	4	6/3
Zermatt	70	220	Hard	Slushy	Spring	Sun	6	6/3
United States								
Aspen	135	158	Good	Open	Varied	Fine	3	13/3
Deer Valley	226	255	Good	Open	Varied	Fair	1	12/3

http://www.skiclub.co.uk L = lower slopes; U = upper slopes





RUGBY UNION

France put accent on World Cup ambitions

By David Hands, Rugby Correspondent

FRANCE, making a virtue out of necessity, have dismissed the Five Nations Championship match against England at Twickenham on Saturday as no more than a stepping stone on the way to the World Cup. That may be easier for Pierre Villepreux, the coach, to say than for his players, who have not lost to England in the past four encounters, to believe.

It says something about their long casualty list that only seven of the players who put England to the sword in Paris a year ago appear this weekend. Five forwards and the two half backs feature in a starting XV that shows six changes, one positional, from the side beaten by a single point by Wales.

Pascal Giordani, 24, the compact Dax centre who has worked his way through the representative ranks, is the only newcomer, in the absence of Richard Dourthe. Xavier Garbajosa replaces Philippe Bernat-Salles on the wing and the back row is reshuffled, Richard Castel making a rare start at flanker — he is usually kept in reserve as an impact player — alongside Christophe Juillet at No 8. Thomas Lièvremont moves to blind-side flanker, but the clattering sound is the dropping to the bench of Christian Califano.

Last season Califano, the Toulouse prop, was the best of his kind in the world. Named player of the season by the *Rothmans Rugby Yearbook*, he was not only a fine technical exponent of tight-forward play but his skill in the loose was also devastating. His cap against Wales was his 41st and he is still only 26, but on Saturday he gives way to the equally mobile Stade Français prop, Sylvain Marconnet.

There is a belief in France that Califano has required longer to recover from a disc problem that prevented him from playing for three months at the start of the season. Califano was replaced by Marconnet at the interval as France struggled to beat Ireland 10-9 last month and Ben Evans, the young Swansea prop in his first international season, seemed comfortable enough against him in Paris. There is every chance that Califano will make an entry at some stage against England, but he does not appear to be the player he was.

"This game is important for the English because they still have ambitions about winning the grand slam," Villepreux said, "but for France all that is important now is the World Cup. This next game will be interesting for us to see where we are, but the result is not a major concern. It will show us exactly what we can do against England as both sides are going to be strong contenders in the World Cup."



ALEX LIVESEY / ALLSPORT

Richard Hill takes possession as the England forwards train at Twickenham yesterday

However, Villepreux is concerned enough about the threat posed by England's back five. "The fact that they have Tim Rodber in the second row has made the back row even stronger," he said. "Those are the main threats our players will have to look out for. Obviously the fact that we have been weakened by our own injuries will make it that much harder."

While England trained in bright sunshine at Twickenham, Wales prepared for their visit to Italy with a session at Swansea. They leave for Treviso today with George Coste, the Italy coach, whose side will be confirmed tomorrow, anxious about the revitalised form of Neil Jenkins.

"He was completely transformed [against France] from last year," Coste said. "He seems a totally different player. He was superb in Paris and Graham Henry must take the credit for that. The team obviously understands what Graham is trying to achieve."

FRANCE: E Ntamack (Toulouse), X Garbajosa (Toulouse), P Giordani (Dax), F Comba (Stade Français), T Lombard (Stade Français); T Castaignède (Castres), P Carbonneau (Brive); S Marconnet (Stade Français), R Ibañez (Perpignan, captain), F Tournaire (Toulouse), O Brouzet (Bègles-Bordeaux), F Pelous (Toulouse), T Lièvremont (Perpignan), R Castel (Béziers), C Juillet (Stade Français). Replacements: C Laussucq (Stade Français), D Aucagne (Pau), C Dominici (Stade Français), M Raynaud (Narbonne), D Auradou (Stade Français), C Califano (Toulouse), M de Rougemont (Bègles-Bordeaux).

Telfer opts for continuity but adds conditions

By Alasdair Reid

IRONIC as it may be that Jim Telfer was born on St Patrick's Day, the Scotland coach was yesterday able to celebrate his 59th birthday by announcing no changes to the side to play Ireland at Murrayfield on Saturday from the one that lost to England a month ago. Of all the things Telfer has learnt in his time, the value of consistent selection must rank highly.

The Scotland team that played at Twickenham did, of course, make the task a little easier, with a powerful, albeit losing, performance. With Gary Armstrong restored to the side — he missed the international against Italy because of an arm injury — Telfer clearly hopes that the momentum of Scotland's display against England will carry over into the Ireland match.

In saying that, however, he also sounded a cautionary note. "We have to be careful to ensure that the players do not become complacent," Telfer said. "Continuity is all very well, but we have to make it clear to our players that others are still pressing for their positions. They are under no illusions that they have to improve on their performance against Italy."



Telfer: cautionary note



Telfer is almost obliged to rate the Irish, having coached four of their chosen pack with the British Isles in South Africa two years ago. Three of those players — Paul Wallace, Keith Wood and Jeremy Davidson — were among the Ireland tight forwards outplayed by England 12 days ago, but Telfer dismissed any suggestion that they are anything but formidable opponents. "The front five are very experienced internationals and very able players," he said.

Telfer drew just as little from the fact that Scotland have not lost to Ireland since 1988. He said: "We have had very close games both in Dublin and at Murrayfield in the same period."

SCOTLAND: G H Metcalfe (Glasgow Caledonians), C A Murray (Edinburgh Reivers), A V Tait (Edinburgh Reivers), J A Leslie (Sanyo), K M Logan (Wasps); G P J Townsend (Brive), G Armstrong (Newcastle Falcons); T J Smith (Glasgow Caledonians), G C Bulloch (Glasgow Caledonians), A P Burnell (London Scottish), A Murray (Bedford), S B Grimes (Glasgow Caledonians), P Walton (Newcastle Falcons), M D Leslie (Edinburgh Reivers), E W Peters (Bath). Replacements: S L Longstaff (Glasgow Caledonians), C M Chalmers (Edinburgh Reivers), I T Fairley (Edinburgh Reivers), A C Pountney (Northampton), A I Reed (Wasps), D I W Hilton (Bath), S J Brotherstone (Edinburgh Reivers).

Johns decides to return to Ulster

SARACENS may have lost one international lock temporarily, but the Tetley's Bitter Cup holders will lose another permanently at the end of this season (David Hands writes). Danny Grewcock, the England forward, is unlikely to play again this season and Paddy Johns, the Ireland captain, plans to return to Ulster once his contract expires in May.

Johns, 30, was always likely to return to Ulster sooner rather than later. He joined Saracens on a one-year contract and renewed for a second year; he was eager to give professional rugby a chance but behind him he has qualifications as a dentist and four years of practice in Newry.

"Paddy is looking towards the future, both in dentistry and because his two children will need to be settled in schools," Mike Scott, the Saracens team manager, said.

That Ulster, as European champions, are riding the crest of a wave will be an added incentive for Johns who will win his fiftieth cap for Ireland against Scotland on Saturday. His departure will leave Saracens, who lost a useful utility back-five forward in Ben Sturnham to Bath last summer, seeking a quality replacement and they have already been linked with Scott Murray, the Scotland and Bedford lock.



Johns: family decision

RFU refuses to enter the Cotton trade

The Rugby Football Union has rebuffed an offer by the Reform Group to drop its motion of no confidence in the union hierarchy in exchange for key roles for Fran Cotton and Bill Beaumont. The group wanted guaranteed places for Cotton, their chairman, and Beaumont on the management board as the price to pay for abandoning a special general meeting.

In addition they wanted Cotton to be appointed chairman of the National Playing Committee and Beaumont installed as one of the union's International Board representatives. "We will not be blackmailed by ultimatums and bully-boy tactics," an official said.

It means the special meeting goes ahead — the date and venue of which will be announced by next Tuesday. The Reform Group wants to overthrow the entire board with the exception of Peter Trunkfield, the president, and Francis Baron, the chief executive.

LOOSE TALK

e-mail: sport@the-times.co.uk

Saving Wales

The chances of Wales playing South Africa to mark the opening of the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff on June 26 are fast receding. Vernon Pugh has admitted that the building timetable is so tight that the contractors might not be able to afford to stop work for the three weeks that it will take to lay and bed down the pitch and clear up again afterwards.

South Africa want to play and suggest that if the game is called off then Wales could go to Johannesburg after their tour to Argentina. In an emergency it sounds like a good idea.

Refs shown door

Richmond are not the only club to feel the effects of Ashley Levett's decision to pull out of rugby. The monthly meeting of the Hampshire RU Referees' Society was due to be held at Winchester RFC — also owned by Levett — on Monday, but the doors were locked and the lights turned out.

Troubled times

Were Irish rugby supporters of 70 years ago the first sporting hooligans? The *Irish Times* of February 13 1929 reported that "steps are to be taken by the English Rugby Union to prevent a recurrence of the cushion-throwing scenes which occurred after the game at Twickenham on Saturday last. At one time hundreds of leather cushions were thrown about with disregard of the possible danger to spectators."

Engineer-Commander Cooper, the RFU secretary, was not amused. "The trouble was caused by supporters of the Irish team who were carried away in the excitement of their victory over England," he said. Ireland won 6-5. One wonders what might happen if they win at Murrayfield for the first time since 1985.

Driven by Ford

Catch them young. Ford, the motor company, is pumping £750,000 over the next three years in joining the RFU in setting up a grassroots programme to develop Tag Rugby in primary schools throughout England. You can discover what it's all about at Twickenham on Saturday when a demonstration will be held before England play France.

Front to fore

The Thornensians club in South Yorkshire could provide the entire front row for the England 18 Club side that takes part in an international festival in Edinburgh next month. Richard List and Andrew Gravil, the props, and Andrew Nunns, the hooker, have all been included in the 26-strong squad, as has their colleague Martin Crabtree, a wing. The matches will be the first internationals played by the England 18 Club Squad since its formation six months ago.



Cronin: testimonial dinner

Carling helps

Will Carling will be the star guest at a charity match in support of Disability Sport England on Sunday. It takes place at RAF Halton rugby club to raise funds for the charity that was started in 1961 by Professor Sir Ludwig Guttman to provide sport and leisure opportunities for adults and children with disabilities.

Cronin tribute

Gavin Hastings and Lawrence Dallaglio will be among a galaxy of big names paying tribute to Damian Cronin at a testimonial dinner for the former Scotland international at the Kensington Hilton, London, on April 22. Cronin, 35, retired last autumn because of a knee injury. For further information contact Dennis Harding on 0181-940 0944.

MARK SOUSTER



HEXHAM

ROB WRIGHT

2.25 Turkish Tower. 3.00 Quick March. 3.35 Parsons Boy. 4.15 Brancepeth Belle. 4.50 Santa Jet. 5.25 Five Flags.

GOING: SOFT (HEAVY IN PLACES) SIS

2.25 FEDERATION BREWERY NOVICES CHASE (£2,988: 2m 110yd) (6 runners)

1 05F3 CHARNWOOD JACK 28 (F) M Todhunter 6-11-3 B Harding
2 P53P HOWYOUDOING 30 S Kettlewell 9-11-3 B Storey 83
3 PFP6 SUL FOSSO 24 Mrs S Smith 7-11-3 R Wilkinson (5) –
4 P048 TURKISH TOWER 5 (S) R Nixon 8-11-3 S Taylor 79
5 00PB SLIEMA CREEK 30 (B,D,G,S) V Thompson 5-11-2 Mr M Thompson 47
6 -508 DRUMDONNA 16 (S) P Beaumont 9-10-12 B Grattan (3) –

4-7 Charnwood Jack, 4-1 Howyoudoing, 6-1 Turkish Tower, 14-1 Sliema Creek, 16-1 Drumdonna, 33-1 Sul Fosso.

3.00 KEOGHANS NOVICES HURDLE (£2,259: 3m) (7 runners)

1 2110 QUICK MARCH 33 (S) E Waymes 8-12-2 N Horrocks (5)
2 6 ARISAIG 19 N Waggott 5-11-3 S Taylor –
3 0PP- BLACK ABBEY 386 (D,S) R Ford 8-11-3 Mr B Gibson (7) –
4 3-06 HIRT LODGE 7 J Dixon 8-11-3 B Storey 72
5 0-6 [illegible] POINT 79 D Lamb 8-11-3 J Burke –
6 00PP STEPHEN'S BRAE 33 N Richards 7-11-3 B Harding 50
7 0/84 THE COUNTRY DON 27 K Morgan 7-11-3 A S Smith –

4-9 Quick March, 3-1 The Country Don, 14-1 Arisaig, 20-1 Hirt Lodge, 25-1 Stephen's Brae, 33-1 Black Abbey, Signal Point.

3.35 DENNIS WAGGOTT BUILDERS HANDICAP CHASE (£4,056: 4m) (8 runners)

1 4233 PARSONS BOY 8 (G,S) N Richards 10-12-0 B Harding
2 4241 SWANBISTER 13 (F,S) L Lungo 9-11-3 Mr B Gibson (7) 122
3 FP22 BOLD ACTION 13 (C,F,S) J Turner 8-10-8 R Guest 115
4 -4U0 SIRERIC 20 (CD,S) S Bell 9-10-1 K Johnson 119
5 6225 PINK GIN 13 (V,D,F,G,S) M Meagher 12-10-0 R Wilkinson (5) 120
6 3334 KIBBY BANK 24 J Howard Johnson 10-10-0 Mr J Crowley (5) 112
7 -453 CADRILLON 20 (C,G,S) A J Lockwood 9-10-0 L Cooper (7) 118
8 P646 SPRINGLEA TOWER 13 (B) R Nixon 6-10-0 S Taylor 88

5-2 Swanbister, 3-1 Bold Action, 9-2 Parsons Boy, 5-1 Kibby Bank, 7-1 Pink Gin, 10-1 Cadrillon, 14-1 Sireric, 66-1 Springlea Tower.

4.15 FEDERATION BREWERY CONDITIONAL JOCKEYS MARES HANDICAP HURDLE (£2,439: 2m) (5 runners)

1 2032 BRANCEPETH BELLE 20 (S) N Mason 9-12-0 G F Ryan 69
2 3040 APOLLO'S DAUGHTER 33 (CD,F,G) J Goulding 11-12-0 L Cooper (3) 63
3 0FP2 MADGE MCSPLASH 16 (CD,S) J Jefferson 7-11-0 T Siddall
4 BP34 DOUBLE BUCK 2 (B,S) W Kemp 7-10-7 62
5 5PP6 MEADOWLECK 6 W Young 10-10-0 N Horrocks 30

6-4 Madge McSplash, 7-4 Brancepeth Belle, 4-1 Apollo's Daughter, 13-2 Double Buck, 50-1 Meadowleck.

4.50 SHIRE BUILDING SERVICES HANDICAP CHASE (£3,236: 2m 4f 110yd) (12 runners)

1 3PFF GAELIC BLUE 21 (D,G,S) Mrs S Smith 9-12-0 R Wilkinson (5)
2 -P5P TIMBUCKTOO 44 (B,G,S) J Oliver 12-11-11 D Parker –
3 F405 CARLEY LAD 30 (D,S) N Mason 11-11-11 R Guest 105
4 0U10 BLAZING DAWN 30 (C,D,F,G,S) J Hubbuck 12-11-1 B Storey 104
5 2242 SANTA JET 8 (BF,D,F,S) G M Moore 8-10-10 J Callaghan
6 25PP CULLANE LAKE 30 (CD,G,S) Miss K Milligan 9-10-4 B Grattan (3) 106
7 0P00 DAWN LAD 70 (F,G) W Haigh 10-10-3 F Leahy 63
8 2PPP DOOK'S DELIGHT 31 (D,G,S) R Fahey 8-10-3 A S Smith –
9 4453 FALCON'S FLAME 19 V Thompson 6-10-1 Mr M Thompson 100
10 1-0P JOE JAGGER 54 (G) M Hammond 8-10-0 B Harding –
11 P4F6 POLITICAL MANDATE 7 R Nixon 6-10-0 S Taylor 66
12 0053 BROWNRATH KING 15 (G,S) C Grant 10-10-0 Mr J Crowley (5) –

2-1 Santa Jet, 4-1 Blazing Dawn, 6-1 Gaelic Blue, Brownrath King, 7-1 Falcon's Flame, 10-1 Carley Lad, 14-1 Cullane Lake, 25-1 others.

5.25 BUCHANAN ALE HANDICAP HURDLE (£2,023: 3m) (6 runners)

1 0PP1 PHAR ECHO 6 (D,G,S) L Lungo 5-12-5 (6ex) Mr B Gibson (7)
2 F113 ZAMHAREER 13 (D,F,G,S) R Ford 8-12-0 N Horrocks (5) 76
3 10/6 PILKINGTON 61 (D,S) J Howard Johnson 9-11-12 N Hannity (5) 42
4 0345 FIVE FLAGS 26 (F,G,S) Mrs S Smith 11-11-11 R Wilkinson (5) 81
5 53U3 D'ARBLAY STREET 2 (B,G,S) W Kemp 10-11-0 B Storey 77
6 0P-P TOBY 13 (F,G) N Richards 6-11-0 B Harding –

2-1 Zamhareer, 5-2 Phar Echo, 4-1 Five Flags, 9-2 D'Arblay Street, 10-1 Pilkington, 20-1 Toby.

COURSE SPECIALISTS

TRAINERS: L Lungo, 22 winners from 90 runners, 24.4%; G M Moore, 19 from 79, 24.1%; S Bell, 3 from 18, 16.7%; P Beaumont, 7 from 50, 14.0%; M Hammond, 11 from 85, 12.9%; M Todhunter, 5 from 41, 12.2%.

JOCKEYS: N Hannity, 4 winners from 17 rides, 23.5%; R Wilkinson, 4 from 25, 16.0%; J Callaghan, 8 from 58, 13.8%; R Guest, 10 from 73, 13.7%; B Grattan, 3 from 30, 10.0%. Only qualifiers.

LINGFIELD PARK

ROB WRIGHT

1.50 Golden Lyric. 2.20 Pericles. 2.55 Palacegate Touch. 3.30 Emmajoun. 4.10 Philistar. 4.40 Sheer Native. 5.15 Denbrae.

GOING: STANDARD
DRAW: 5F-1M, LOW NUMBERS BEST SIS

1.50 PHILIPS BATTERIES AMATEUR RIDERS HANDICAP (Div I: £1,718: 1m) (12 runners)

1 0-20 KINGS HARMONY 21 (C,F) R Ingram 6-11-7 R Guest (5) 5
2 -023 JUBILEE SCHOLAR 23 (B,CD) G L Moore 6-11-3 D H Dunsdon (5) 6
3 -204 FOREST ROBIN 44 (D,F) Mrs L Stubbs 6-11-1 Mrs N Lockwood (7) 4
4 63U1 STATISTICIAN 5 (E,C,D,F,G,S) John Berry 7-10-13 (5ex) A Evans (3)
5 00-6 KARL 72 (CD) J Bridger 5-10-12 D Bridger (5) 11
6 -102 SOAKING 28 (CD,F) P Burgoyne 9-10-10 B Kendellen (5) 10
7 -350 SUITE FACTORS 33 (F,S) K Burke 5-10-7 Miss R Clark 3
8 3321 GOLDEN LYRIC 8 J Pearce 4-10-5 (5ex) Mrs L Pearce 7
9 5260 SASEEDO 16 (F,G,S) J Bridger 9-10-1 Miss R Illman (5) 9
10 5835 DARK MENACE 23 (B,F) E Wheeler 7-10-0 A Bradley (5) 2
11 000- CRYSTAL CRAZE 68J P Bowen 4-10-0 8
12 6-05 MULLAGH HILL LAD 17 N Littmoden 6-9-13 L Paddock (7) 1

Crest Robin, 9-2 Statistician, 5-1 Jubilee Scholar, 7-1 Golden Lyric, 8-1 Kings Harmony, Soaking, 10-1 Suite Factors, 12-1 others.

2.20 CUSTOM CARE COMPANY COMMUNICATIONS CLAIMING STAKES (£2,760: 7f) (13 runners)

1 6/6 BROUGHTONS MILL 22 W Musson 4-9-10 R Cochrane 11
2 0-53 KINNINO 14 G L Moore 5-9-10 R Brisland (7) 3
3 2422 SPEEDY CLASSIC 14 (CD,F) M Heaton-Ellis 10-9-10 A Clark 9
4 6646 ANOKATO 19 (V,C,F) Mrs N Macauley 5-9-9 Dean McKeown 2
5 0040 BEST QUEST 15 (CD,G) K Burke 4-9-8 D Sweeney 8
6 0234 PERICLES 23 (D,G,S) Miss G Kelleway 5-9-8 T Quinn 4
7 0016 GENIUS 2 (C) D Chapman 4-9-7 A Culhane 1
8 0650 PRIVATE SEAL 21 (B,F) J C Poulton 4-8-4 J Weaver 12
9 0-00 COURTNEY GYM 10 (B) P Burgoyne 4-9-2 J Tate 7
10 2064 PLEIN GAZ 16 (C,S) R O'Sullivan 6-9-3 S Sanders 10
11 00-0 MISS SKYE 21 (CD) Miss B Sanders 4-9-1 P Doe (3)
12 0005 PEARLY QUEEN 17 G Bravery 4-8-12
13 44 TUFAMORE 15 K Burke 3-8-11 D Williams (7) 13

5-2 Anokato, 9-2 Speedy Classic, 11-2 Genius, 6-1 Broughtons Mill, 7-1 Tufamore, 8-1 Kinnino, 12-1 Best Quest, Pericles, 20-1 others.

2.55 T.D.K. U.K. CLAIMING STAKES (£2,107: 6f) (8 runners)

1 1132 KRYSTAL MAX 14 (CD,F) T Mills 6-10-0 L Carter 3
2 2-40 MUTASAWWAR 63 (B,CD,S) M Saunders 5-10-0 P Doe (3) 5
3 4133 PALACEGATE TOUCH 27 (B,CD,F,G,S) J Berry 9-9-10 P Bradley (7) 8
4 40-4 BOLDLY CLIFF 49 (B,D) A Herriges (Bel) 5-9-8 C Dehens 6
5 00-0 AFTER EIGHT 63 (B,CD) M Saunders 4-9-8 R Price 2
6 0132 CHALUZ 12 (BF,D) N Littmoden 5-9-6 J Quinn 7
7 000/ WHIZZ KID 471 (F) J Bradley 5-8-11 S Drowne 4
8 3145 LIGHT BREEZE 12 (CD) G L Moore 3-8-4 R Brisland (7) 1

7-4 Krystal Max, 11-4 Palacegate Touch, 6-1 Boldly Cliff, 7-1 Light Breeze, 8-1 Chaluz, 10-1 Mutasawwar, 16-1 After Eight, 33-1 Whizz Kid.

3.30 E.E.S. LIGHTNING HANDICAP (£3,556: 5f) (9 runners)

1 -134 SOAKED 14 (CD,F,G) D Chapman 6-10-0 A Culhane 4
2 030- SPENDER 142 (CD,F,G) V Soane 10-9-13 R Cochrane 5
3 1d14 TEAR WHITE 21 (CD,F,G) T Mills 5-9-8 T Quinn 3
4 140- CONSULTANT 154 (D) N Littmoden 3-8-8 D Holland 1
5 0240 PALACEGATE JACK 8 (B,CD,F,G,S) J Berry 8-8-9 P Bradley (7) 7
6 30-1 EMMAJOUN 14 (CD) W G M Turner 4-8-7 T Sprake 6
7 4533 FRIENDLY BRAVE 21 (B,CD,F,S) Miss G Kelleway 9-7-13 C Cogan (7) 2
8 0033 DANDE TIMES 12 (B,D) K Ivory 4-7-10 C Catlin (7) 9
9 2565 DANCING JACK 16 (CD) J Bridger 6-7-10 R Brisland (7) 6

5-2 Emmajoun, 3-1 Tear White, 7-2 Soaked, 7-1 Palacegate Jack, 10-1 others.

4.10 NESTLE FOODSERVICES HANDICAP (£6,215: 1m 2f) (12 runners)

1 1122 THEKRYAATI 15 (BF,CD) M Johnston 4-9-13 D Holland 8
2 1352 PHILISTAR 16 (E,CD,F,G) K Burke 6-9-11 D Sweeney 12
3 0526 FAILED TO HIT 22 (B,CD,F) N Littmoden 6-9-10 J Tate 6
4 -110 BANK ON HIM 16 (CD) G L Moore 4-9-10 J Quinn 7
5 [illegible]
6 00-5 SEA DANZIG 16 (CD,F,G) J Bridger 6-9-3 R Brisland (7) 1
7 400- ASPIRANT DANCER 162 (D,S) M Bell 4-9-2 M Fenton 5
8 450- MOLA 249 M Ryan 4-9-1 D Hayden (7) 4
9 0-11 LAW DANCER 15 (C) T Mills 6-9-0 Lisa Hackett (7) 2
10 0-03 NIGHT FLYER 25 (S) J Hills 4-8-13 M Hills 3
11 -121 SCRAGGYS DREAM 33 (CD) P Mitchell 3-8-13 R Cochrane 11
12 2363 KI CHI SAGA 21 (B,CD) P Burgoyne 7-8-3 F Norton 9

7-2 Thekryaati, 11-2 Scraggys Dream, 6-1 Philistar, 7-1 Bank On Him, Sea Danzig, 10-1 Aspirant Dancer, Law Dancer, Ki Chi Saga, 12-1 others.

4.40 R.E.S. GROUP CLASSIFIED STAKES (£3,572: 1m 4f) (5 runners)

1 2101 BANBURY 23 (E,CD,G) C Dwyer 5-9-10 J Gotobed (7) 3
2 0-15 SPACE RACE 37 (BF,CD,S) C Cyzer 5-9-10 J Weaver 2
3 4-10 SHOGUN 31 (E,C) K Burke 4-9-8 D Sweeney 5
4 -613 MARTHA REILLY 19 Mrs B Waring 3-7-13 G Bardwell 1
5 05-1 SHEER NATIVE 16 (C) B Hills 3-7-13 K Sked (5) 4

5-4 Sheer Native, 5-2 Space Race, 3-1 Banbury, 8-1 Shogun, 20-1 Martha Reilly.

5.15 PHILIPS BATTERIES AMATEUR RIDERS HANDICAP (Div II: £1,708: 1m) (12 runners)

1 -234 GADGE 5 (CD,F,G,S) A Bailey 8-11-7 Miss Bridget Gatehouse (5) 3
2 -544 WAIKIKI BEACH 33 (B,CD,F,G) G L Moore 8-11-4 B Hitchcott (7) 11
3 20-0 RODERICK HUDSON 29J (F) J R Poulton 7-11-3 Miss C Savell (7) 10
4 0-31 DENBRAE 17 (F,G) J Pearce 7-11-0 Mrs L Pearce 5
5 -020 FAMOUS 21 (V,D,F,G,S) J Bridger 6-11-0 D Bridger (5) 7
6 -220 LANDRUN 21 (D) H Collingridge 4-10-13 D H Dunsdon (5) 6
7 5066 DESERT INVADER 17 (D,S) D Chapman 8-10-9 Miss R Clark 1
8 /100 MELOMANIA 17 (CD) P Howling 7-10-7 Miss C Haddow (5) 4
9 -534 JONATHAN'S GIRL 33 J Bridger 4-10-3 Miss R Illman (5) 8
10 1250 CLONOE 21 (C,D,F,S) R Ingram 5-10-3 Miss L McIntosh (7) 2
11 0-26 ZABRISKIE 12 G L Moore 5-10-2 Mrs J Moore 12
12 050- SUMBAWA 169 J Bradley 4-10-2 Miss E J Jones (3) 9

7-2 Denbrae, 5-1 Gadge, 8-1 Desert Invader, Jonathan's Girl, 10-1 others.

COURSE SPECIALISTS

TRAINERS: J Berry, 28 winners from 139 runners, 20.1%; B Hills, 15 from 77, 19.5%; D Chapman, 24 from 127, 18.9%; M Bell, 18 from 100, 18.0%; M Johnston, 49 from 285, 17.1%; V Soane, 8 from 49, 16.3%.

JOCKEYS: R Clark, 3 winners from 12 rides, 25.0%; R Guest, 3 from 12, 25.0%; J Weaver, 70 from 322, 21.7%; D Holland, 40 from 193, 20.7%; L Carter, 4 from 21, 19.0%; K Sked, 3 from 17, 17.6%.

RESULTS FROM YESTERDAY'S THREE MEETINGS

Cheltenham

Going: good to soft

2.00 (2m 5f hdle) 1, **BARTON** (L Wyer, 2-1 fav); 2, **Artadoin Lad** (M A Fitzgerald, 28-1); 3, **Winston Run** (G Tormey, 100-1). ALSO RAN: 11-4 Alexander Banquet, 6 Behrajan (5th), 11 Rash Remark, 14 Goodtime George, 16 Arctic Camper (6th), Kings Road (4th), 28 Irish Banker, 33 Glazeaway, 40 Castle Owen, 50 Windross, Winter Garden, 66 Nouveau Cheval, Tara-Brogan, 100 Heros Fatal, 250 Mardsl[illegible] Magnet. 18 ran. NR [illegible] Hill. 9l, ½l, 3½l, 4l, 1¼l. T Easterby at Malton. Tote £2.80; £1.50, £9.50, £55.00. DF £92.20. CSF £61.35. Tricast £3,999.74.

2.35 (2m ch) 1, **CALL EQUINAME** (M A Fitzgerald, 7-2); 2, **Edredon Bleu** (A P McCoy, 3-1 fav); 3, **Direct Route** (N Williamson, 11-2). ALSO RAN: 8-1 Hill Society, 10 Ask Tom, 11 Celibate (5th), 16 Ivadastrol, 20 Mulligan, Papillon, 40 Green Green Desert (4th), Or Royal, 50 Cumbrian Challenge (6th), 66 Lord Dorcet. 13 ran. 1¼l, 3½l, 3l, 1¼l, 8l. P Nicholls at Shepton Mallet. Tote £4.40; £2.20, £2.00, £2.50. DF £6.70. Trifecta £46.90. CSF £12.05. Tricast £50.57.

3.15 (2m 5f hdle) 1, **KHAYRAWANI** (F M Berry, 16-1); 2, [illegible] (C O'Dwyer, 33-1); 3, **Generosa** (T P Treacy, 12-1); 4, **Darapour** (C F Swan, 14-1). ALSO RAN: 13-2 fav Archive Footage, 11 Easter Ross (fell), Ferbet Junior, 14 Galfax, Kates Charm, Master Pilgrim, 16 Robbo, 20 Kingsmark, Polar Prospect, Snow Dragon, 25 Bluedonix, Castle Sweep, Supreme Lady, 28 Fantasist V, 33 Dom Beltrano, Fadalko (6th), Fiehn Joella (5th), Rainbow Frontier, Ramwatch, 40 Allegation, Bakkar, Better Offer, Challenger du Luc, Ela Agapi Mou, 50 Deraydan, Phar Less Hassle. 30 ran. Hd, nk, 5l, sh hd, ¾l. C Roche at Curragh, Co Kildare. Tote £29.90; £6.20, £7.60, £5.10, £2.90. DF £409.90. Tote Trifecta: not won - pool of £13,070.31 carried forward to Cheltenham 3.15 today. CSF £432.28. Tricast £5,884.73.

3.55 (3m 1f ch) 1, **LOOKS LIKE TROUBLE** (P Carberry, 16-1); 2, **Lord Of The River** (A P McCoy, 11-2); 3, **Billingsgate** (P Holley, 25-1). ALSO RAN: 5-4 fav Nick Dundee (fell), 9-2 Splendid, 12 Brother of Iris (fell), Kings Banker (5th), 25 Collier Bay (4th), 33 House Captain, 50 Samuel Wilderspin, 66 Executive King, 100 Ardent Scout, Ardrina, 150 Optimism Reigns. 14 ran. Dist, 3l, 1½l, 7l. Noel T Chance at Lambourn. Tote £17.70; £2.60, £1.90, £4.80. DF £50.00. Tote Trifecta £6,716.40. CSF £86.88. Tricast £2,008.56.

4.30 (4m ch) 1, **DEEJAYDEE** (Mr Anthony Martin, 13-2); 2, **Riot Leader** (Mr A Dempsey, 10-1); 3, **Spot Thedifference** (Mr P Maloney, 13-2). ALSO RAN: 6-1 fav Derrymore Mist (4th), 10 Act In Time (5th), 11 Wesley Warrior (fell), 12 Ivy Boy, Lady Mosiva, 14 Pedere, 16 Stavica, Stormy Session, 20 Stanley Steamer, 25 Castle Red, Lothian Commander, Shanagore Warrior, 33 Browne Returns, No Problem (6th), Oneonthreequarters, 66 Chatergold, 200 Bolshie Baron, Wile Wannabe. 21 ran. Nk, 6l, 7l, 10l, 10l. M Hourigan at Ireland. Tote £6.90; £2.50, £3.10, £3.00. DF £50.90. CSF £60.30. Tricast £415.59.

5.05 (2m 4f 110yd ch) 1, **MAJADOU** (A P McCoy, 7-4 fav); 2, **King of Sparta** (C Maude, 33-1); 3, **Wayward King** (R Dunwoody, 25-1); 4, **The Outback Way** (R Walsh, 10-1). ALSO RAN: 15-2 Hoh Express, 10 Tidebrook, 12 Boardroom Shuffle, Listen Timmy, 16 Dr [illegible], 20 Nearly An Eye (fell), Northern Starlight, 25 Pete The Parson, Sounds Like Fun (6th), 28 All The Aces, Dark Stranger, 40 Philip's Woody (5th), 50 Bells Life, 66 Coulton. 18 ran. NR Linden's Lotto. 16l, nk, nk, ¾l, 3l. M Pipe at Wellington. Tote £2.40; £1.50, £9.40, £4.20, [illegible]. DF £108.40. CSF £61.93. Tricast £1,065.59.

5.40 (2m 110yd flat) 1, **MONSIGNOR** (B Powell, 50-1); 2, **Golden Alpha** (A P McCoy, 7-2); 3, **Canasta** (L Corcoran, 25-1). ALSO RAN: 11-4 fav Bilverdin, 11-2 Alexander Prize, 11 Mestre Sala, Scarlet Emperor, 12 Ingonish, 16 Billywell (6th), 25 Ballet-K (5th), Barney Knows, Frosty Canyon, Toggi Dancer, 33 No Forecast, [illegible] Man, 40 Matt Holland, Queens Harbour (4th), 50 Absalmo, Baccarat, Behemore, Mysilvernverleale, 66 All Antrim, Gushan, 100 Entoorne, 200 Conspirito. 25 ran. 1¼l, ¾l, 4l, 2l, hd. M Pitman at Upper Lambourn. Tote £88.20; £14.20, £2.10, £7.90. DF £288.20. CSF £195.14. Tricast £4,304.66.

Jackpot: not won (pool of £171,168.26 carried forward to Cheltenham today).

Placepot: £1,009.40. Quadpot: £215.80.

Huntingdon

Going: good to soft

1.50 (2m 5f 110yd hdle) 1, **Dunston Heath** (W Worthington, 16-1); 2, Inchydoney Boy (10-1); 3, Colwall (3-1). Real Fire (4th) 5-2 fav. 9 ran. 9l, 3l. B Leavy. Tote £16.90; £2.60, £2.00, £1.50. DF £69.70. CSF £130.88. Tricast £499.17.

2.20 (2m 5f 110yd hdle) 1, **Ashgan** (R Wakley, 100-30); 2, Burn Out (10-1); 3, Anugraha (50-1). Audacter 5-2 fav. 17 ran. 4l, 2½l. Ian Williams. Tote £2.60; £1.90, £2.20, £7.50. DF £20.60. CSF £33.18.

2.55 (3m ch) 1, **Wren Warbler** (A S Smith, 15-2); 2, Moonfighter (5-1); 3, Torn Pinch (4-1 fav). 12 ran. 11l, 2½l. Mrs P Robeson. Tote £9.70; £3.20, £2.00, £2.50. DF £30.50. CSF £43.36. Tricast £162.24.

3.30 (2m 110yd hdle) 1, **Earp** (Miss P Robson, 7-1); 2, Captain Biggles (5-1); 3, Alka International (7-4 fav). 8 ran. ¾l, 7l. F Murtagh. Tote £12.20; £3.10, £1.60, £1.20. DF £19.10. CSF £39.10. Tricast £80.52.

4.10 (3m 2f hdle) 1, **Tilty** (Gary Lyons, 6-1); 2, Grunge (8-1); 3, Seize The Day (2-1 fav). 9 ran. 1¼l, 1¼l. A Streeter. Tote £8.60; £3.10, £2.70, £1.60. DF £23.20. CSF £51.32. Tricast £120.83.

4.40 (2m 4f 110yd ch) 1, **Trouble Ahead** (R Wakley, 5-4); 2, No More Hassle (10-11 fav); 3, Murberry (20-1). 4 ran. 6l, dist. K Bailey. Tote £2.70. DF £1.10. CSF £2.62.

5.15 (2m 110yd flat) 1, **Rooniyme** (S Kelly, 2-1 fav); 2, Tunnel Hill Lad (20-1); 3, Manhama (20-1). 12 ran. NR Qualitair Survivor. 2l, 13l. Miss Venetia Williams. Tote £3.00; £1.40, £7.40, £2.50. DF £85.60. CSF £51.42.

Placepot: £121.70. Quadpot: £13.00.

Newton Abbot

Going: soft

1.55 (3m 2f 110yd ch) 1, **True Fortune** (R Widger, 6-4 fav); 2, Rocky Park (4-1); 3, Brush Off (8-1). 5 ran. Dist, dist. V Dartnall. Tote £2.10; £1.40, £2.00. DF £8.40. CSF £7.11.

2.25 (2m 6f hdle) 1, **Blue Blazer** (T O'Connor, 6-4 fav); 2, The Minder (13-2); 3, Falmouth Bay (13-2). 7 ran. 1¼l, 13l. R Frost. Tote £2.20; £1.60, £2.60. DF £15.60. CSF £11.25.

3.05 (2m 110yd ch) 1, **Step In Line** (J Frost, 5-1); 2, Beng (10-1); 3, Fleeting Mandate (5-4 fav). 7 ran. 11l, 7l. R Frost. Tote £5.60; £1.90, £2.30. DF £17.70. CSF £46.13.

3.45 (2m 5f 110yd ch) 1, **Oriental Style** (F Kenny, 100-30); 2, Meting (9-2); 3, Hold Your Ranks (3-1 jt-fav). Cedar Square (5th) 3-1 jt-fav. 7 ran. ½l, 14l. G Balding. Tote £4.30; £1.80, £3.10. DF £10.20. CSF £18.61.

4.20 (2m 6f hdle) 1, **L'Ideefix** (T Jenks, 9-4 fav); 2, Hasten Bak (9-2); 3, Border Trader (6-1). 13 ran. 17l, 13l. T George. Tote £3.50; £1.70, £1.90, £3.20. DF £9.00. CSF £11.58.

4.55 (2m 5f 110yd ch) 1, **Ticket To The Moon** (Mr A Farrant, 3-1); 2, Flying Maria (6-1); 3, Rasta Man (11-2). Marching Marquis 13-8 fav. 14 ran. 5l, 3l. Mrs Jackie Scott. Tote £3.60; £1.30, £1.90, £2.10. DF £10.80. CSF £22.41.

5.30 (2m 1f hdle) 1, **Optimistic Thinker** (T Jenks, 10-1); 2, Mr Perfecta (3-1); 3, Brookside (20-1). Charlie Chang (6th) evens fav. 7 ran. 4l, 2½l. T George. Tote £16.90; £3.00, £2.30. DF £11.00. CSF £39.63.

Placepot: £96.90. Quadpot: £20.70.

RICHARD EVANS

Nap: FLORIDA PEARL (3.15 Cheltenham)

Dorans Pride can prove Ireland's real gem

Florida Pearl and Teeton Mill may find themselves upstaged in the Gold Cup today, Alan Lee believes



CHELTENHAM FESTIVAL

IT HAS always been the focal point of Cheltenham week but, in recent years, not always the highlight. Today, though, 50,000 people inside Prestbury Park may be privileged to witness the greatest Gold Cup of the decade. The ingredients are all in place — nation against nation, potential against experience, speed against stamina. When the talking stops, prepare to acclaim an estimable new champion.

Two horses have dominated the build-up. Talk to anyone Irish about Florida Pearl and an awed reverence descends. They dare to whisper his name in the same breath as Arkle and can offer no more profound compliment. Yet as many folk on this side of the Irish Sea will not hear of defeat for the formidable grey, Teeton Mill.

To labour the credentials of those who vie for favouritism, though, is to miss the point. This is not a two-horse race and it does not merely concern the burgeoning careers of trainers Willie Mullins and Venetia Williams.

Indeed, five of the field will start at 10-1 or lower and those at bigger prices will include such plausible contenders as See More Business, Unsinkable Boxer and Suny Bay. When Rob Hartnett, spokesman for the Tote, said yesterday that this is "the most eagerly awaited race in years" he was speaking for us all.

In the balmy sunshine of Cheltenham, Norman Williamson, the jockey of Teeton Mill, surveyed the prospect and beamed, not just for his own chances of a second Gold Cup but with a professional's pleasure in quality. "In the past few years, most people could pick out the first two or three in the Gold Cup but this year there are a lot with chances."

Last week, the intrigue over Williamson's choice of mount obscured the anticipation, muddied the waters. But he can see clearly now and he is mightily relieved to be partnering the pride of Herefordshire. "I think of Teeton Mill as a champion already," he said. "He annihilated the opposition in the King George and he has done everything right. They say Florida Pearl could be the next Arkle. We'll see."

A growing lobby questions Teeton Mill's ability to last up the Cheltenham hill. True, he won the Hennessy Cognac Gold Cup in soft ground but so too, say the doubters, did One Man, for whom the Gold Cup remained a climb too far. Williamson says he has no doubts. "I think he will definitely stay," he said firmly. Richard Dunwoody is not so sure. "I have a slight doubt about Teeton Mill getting the trip," he said. Coming from the rider of Florida Pearl, this may either be significant or psychological but Dunwoody's faith in his own mount, who will start favourite, is infectious.

Various different scenarios nag suggestively. Can Dorans Pride benefit from a more measured preparation and improve on his third places in the past two Gold Cups? He will lack nothing for stamina, as witnessed by his surge up the hill last year after a blunder at the second last fence had cost him the race.

Can Suny Bay put one disappointment behind him and reproduce the form that puts him on a par with the very best of stayers? Can Martin Pipe produce another minor miracle with a novice to win the chasing championship or, more likely, can Paul Nicholls continue his fabulous Festival with a victory for either Double Thriller or See More Business? Nicholls says he cannot choose between them.

A mouthwatering spectacle is in store. Teeton Mill could begin to succeed Desert Orchid in public affection as the first grey to win for ten years. Victory for Florida Pearl will ensure celebrity status for himself and all who sail with him.

But maybe this will be the year for Michael Hourigan and Dorans Pride to prove that horses can be champions even when the fashion and hyperbole has moved elsewhere.

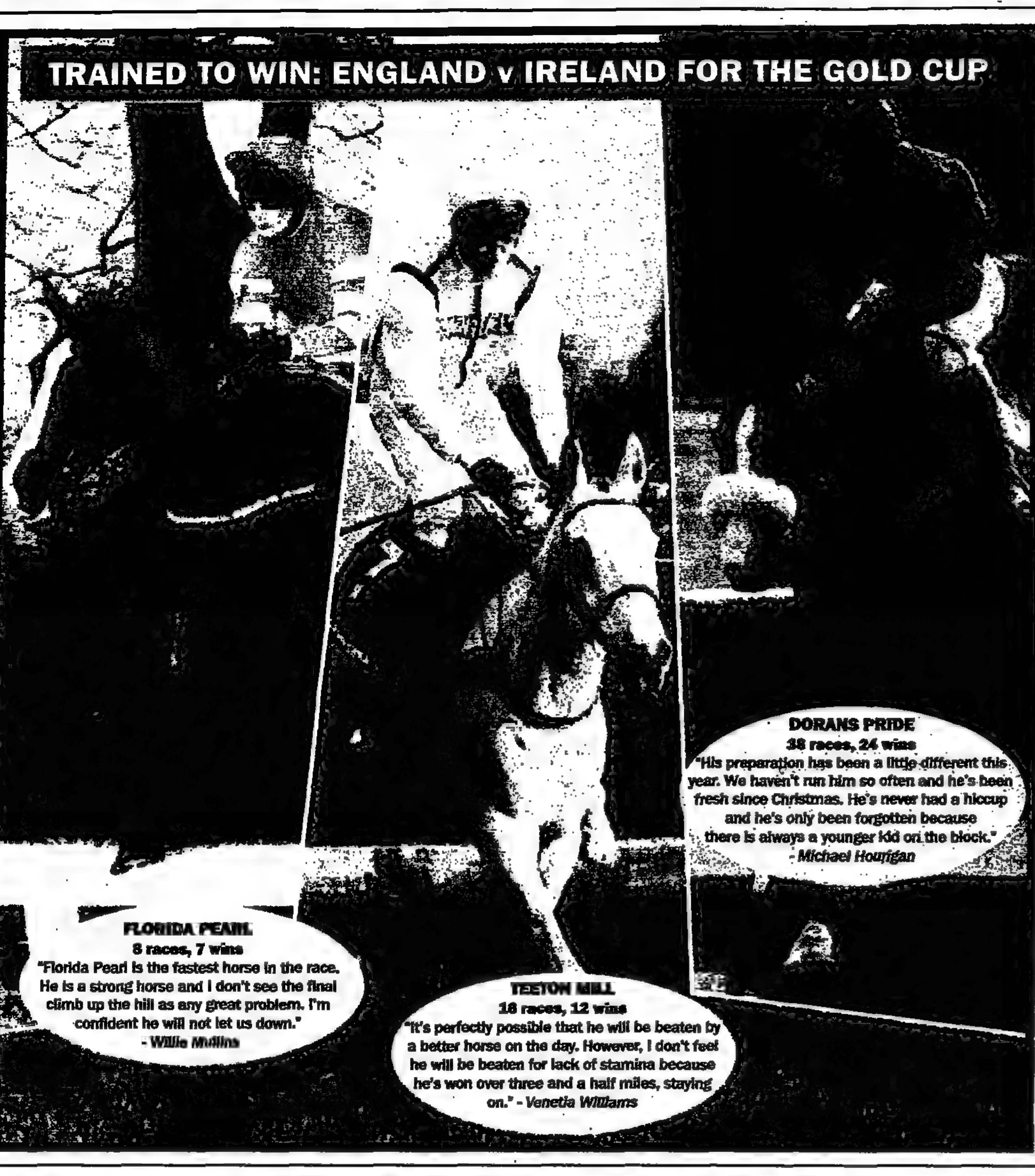
THE EXPERTS' VIEW

ALAN LEE
1. DORANS PRIDE
2. Teeton Mill
3. Suny Bay

CHRIS McGRATH
1. FLORIDA PEARL
2. Dorans Pride
3. Senor El Betrutti

ROB WRIGHT
1. SEE MORE BUSINESS
2. Florida Pearl
3. Simply Dashing

THUNDERER
1. FLORIDA PEARL
2. Suny Bay
3. Senor El Betrutti





THE BIG RACE FIELD (C4)

3.15 TOTE CHELTENHAM GOLD CUP CHASE
(Grade I: £149,600: 3m 2f 110yd) (13 runners)

1 0P-PF3 **ADDINGTON BOY** 39 (C,D,F,G,S) F Murphy 11-12-0 ... A Maguire 130
Owner: Gott Foods Ltd — 10 wins from 27 starts, prize-money £137,790
Will be suited by the likely good ground, but not the force he promised to be and was a distant third to Florida Pearl latest.

2 4-1121 **DORANS PRIDE** 80 (F,G,S) M Hourigan (Ire) 10-12-0 ... P Carberry 137
Owner: T Doran — 24 wins from 38 starts, prize-money £497,255
Third in the past two renewals and looked better than ever latest when new front-running tactics were adopted. Sure to go close.

3 212-11 **DOUBLE THRILLER** 21 (CD,F,G,S) P Nicholls 9-12-0 ... J Tizzard 159
Owner: R Wilkins — 7 wins from 12 starts, prize-money £27,515
Beat Teeton Mill here last April and twice an easy winner of soft races this term. The drying ground has not helped his cause.

4 -42322 **ESCARTEFIGUE** 39 (B,G,S) D Nicholson 7-12-0 ... R Johnson 169
Owner: D Mercer — 7 wins from 27 starts, prize-money £169,179
Has played second fiddle to Teeton Mill and Florida Pearl in big races already this campaign and may again be a support player.

5 111-F1 **FLORIDA PEARL** 39 (C,F,G,S) W P Mullins (Ire) 7-12-0 ... R Dunwoody 158
Owner: Mrs V O'Leary — 7 wins from 8 starts, prize-money £173,797
Lacks experience and has something to find on the formbook, but his potential remains untapped and he looks the one to beat.

6 0B-5P2 **GO BALLISTIC** 47 (F,G,S) D Nicholson 10-12-0 ... A Dobbin 164
Owner: Mrs B Lockhart — 8 wins from 42 starts, prize-money £86,081
Showed more of his old dash when chasing home Cyfor Malta here in January but still clumsy and reliability is not his forte.

7 -12113 **IMPERIAL CALL** 82 (CD,G,S) R Hurley (Ire) 10-12-0 ... Doubtful 157
Owner: Lisselan Farms Ltd — 15 wins from 30 starts, prize-money £351,971
Winner of this in 1996. Has not been easy to train since but not disgraced in top company this term and will go to post fresh.

8 C-41P3 **SEE MORE BUSINESS** 47 (B,C,G,S) P Nicholls 9-12-0 M A Fitzgerald 160
Owner: P Barber & J Keighley — 10 wins from 19 starts, prize-money £167,550
Carried out in freak circumstances when a leading fancy 12 months ago. Disappointing this term and looks up against it.

9 -4F002 **SENOR EL BETRUTTI** 26 (B,C,F,G,S) Mrs S Nock 10-12-0 C Llewellyn 131
Owner: G Nock — 9 wins from 36 starts, £161,379
Quirky, but has a soft spot for this place and will love the drying ground. Ran on well behind Teeton Mill (2m3f) latest.

10 -322P2 **SIMPLY DASHING** 54 (V,F,G,S) T Easterby 8-12-0 ... L Wyer 161
Owner: S Hammond — 15 wins from 29 starts, prize-money £160,857
Smart performer granted good ground although conditions were similar when he was only sixth to Cool Dawn last year.

11 52-11F **SUNY BAY** 80 (D,G,S) S Sherwood 10-12-0 ... G Bradley 175
Owner: Uplands Bloodstock — 11 wins from 21 starts, prize-money £342,868
Classy stayer and, as he goes well fresh, will have his supporters. The drying ground is turning against him though.

12 1-1111 **TEETON MILL** 26 (D,G,S) Miss V Williams 10-12-0 ... N Williamson 160
Owner: The Winning Line — 12 runs from 16 starts, prize-money £191,605
Has carried all before him this season and looks the form pick. However, he is speedy and there remains a doubt about his stamina.

13 11-1F1 **UNSINKABLE BOXER** 26 (D,G,S) M Pipe 10-12-0 ... A P McCoy 142
Owner: P Green — 8 wins from 25 starts, prize-money £79,874
This novice has not looked a natural over fences and would be a much bigger price if it wasn't for the Pipe-McCoy factor.

BETTING: Coral: 11-4 Florida Pearl, Teeton Mill, 6-1 Double Thriller, 7-1 Dorans Pride, 15-2 Escartefigue, 10-1 Unsinkable Boxer, 14-1 See More Business, 20-1 Suny Bay, 25-1 Simply Dashing, 50-1 Imperial Call, Senor El Betrutti, 66-1 Addington Boy, Go Ballistic.

Ladbrokes: 11-4 Florida Pearl, 3-1 Teeton Mill, 6-1 Dorans Pride, Double Thriller, 8-1 Escartefigue, 10-1 Suny Bay, 14-1 See More Business, Unsinkable Boxer, 28-1 Simply Dashing, 50-1 Imperial Call, 66-1 Addington Boy, Go Ballistic, Senor El Betrutti.

Tote: 2-1 Florida Pearl, 3-1 Teeton Mill, 7-1 Dorans Pride, 8-1 Double Thriller, 9-1 Escartefigue, 14-1 See More Business, 16-1 Simply Dashing, Suny Bay, Unsinkable Boxer, 50-1 Addington Boy, Imperial Call, 66-1 Go Ballistic, Senor El Betrutti.

William Hill: 5-2 Florida Pearl, 3-1 Teeton Mill, 6-1 Double Thriller, 7-1 Dorans Pride, Escartefigue, 14-1 See More Business, Suny Bay, Unsinkable Boxer, 20-1 Simply Dashing, 66-1 Addington Boy, Imperial Call, Senor El Betrutti, 100-1 Go Ballistic.

1998: COOL DAWN 10-12-0 A Thornton (25-1) R Alner 17 ran

CHELTENHAM

ROB WRIGHT
2.00 Afarad
2.35 Anzum
3.15 See More Business
3.55 Celtic Abbey
4.30 Space Trucker
5.05 MR STRONG GALE (nap)
5.40 Amitge

Timekeeper's top rating: 2.00 KATARINO.

Our Irish Correspondent: 2.00 Knife Edge. 2.35 Le Coudray. 3.15 Florida Pearl. 3.55 Irish Stout. 4.30 Space Trucker.

Carl Evans: 3.55 Coole Abbey.

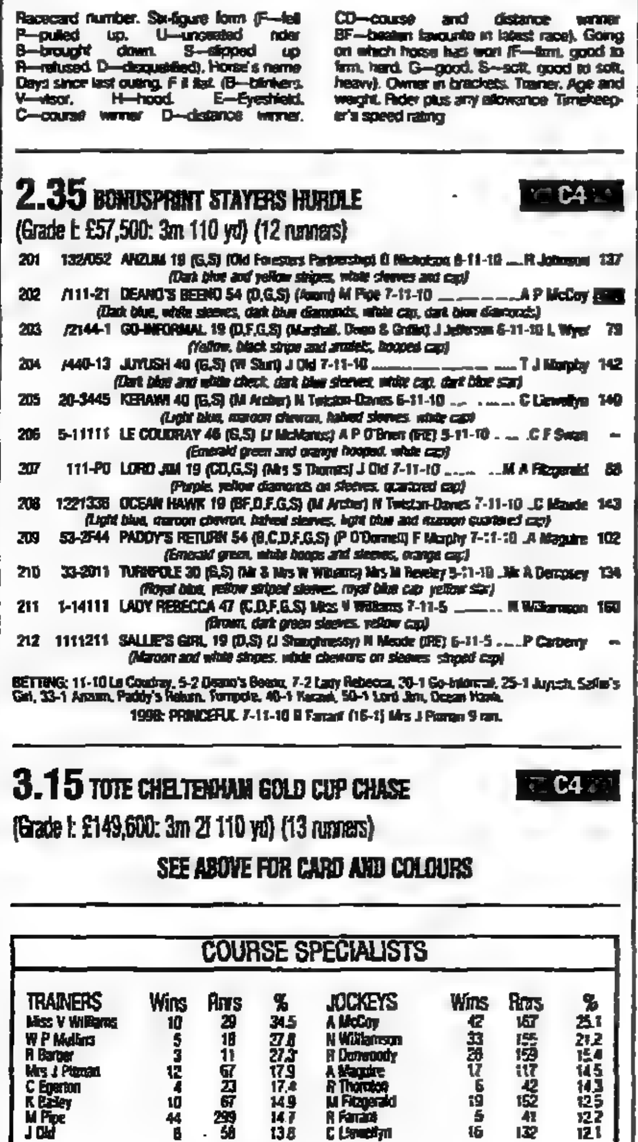
GOING: GOOD TO SOFT — TOTE JACKPOT MEETING — SIS

2.00 ELITE RACING CLUB TRIUMPH HURDLE (C4)
(Grade I: 4-Y-O: £45,960: 2m 1f) (23 runners)

101 31 AFARAD 81 (S) (J McManus) C Roche (IRE) 11-0 ... C F Swan —
(Emerald green and orange hooped, white cap)
102 1 BALLA SOLA 35 (S) (Top Cat Syndicate) W P Mullins (IRE) 11-0 ... R Walsh —
(Black and white chevrons, red cap)
103 FFF3041 BALLYSICYOS 23 (S) (Mrs P A Deal) M Pipe 11-0 ... A P McCoy 59
(Dark blue, yellow hoop, diabolo on sleeves, yellow cap)
104 1251365 CHARLIE'S GOLD 19 (D,G,S) (Classic Gold) A Bailey 11-0 ... D Gallagher 111
(Purple, white sash and stars on sleeves, white cap)
105 21 CORNICHE 13 (S) (J Marks) C Kellett 11-0 ... L Harvey 101
(Yellow, dark blue sash, dark blue cap)
106 1411111 DANGERUS PRECEDENT 21 (CD,G,S) (P Oldfield) C Egerton 11-0 ... N Williamson 122
(Royal blue and navy blue (quartered), sleeves reversed, royal blue cap)
107 1 ENIPEUS 51 (B,S) (M Pipe Racing Club) M Pipe 11-0 ... R Greene 105
(Black, white triple diamond, diabolo on sleeves, white cap)
108 451 FROZEN GROOM 19 (S) (D Starkey) N Meade (IRE) 11-0 ... P Carberry —
(Purple, gold sleeves, hooped cap)
109 3 IMSHISHWAY 20 (A Helaissi) M Pipe 11-0 ... C Maude 57
(Orange, olive green stars on body and cap)
110 3 INCEPTA 19 (Racing Thoroughbreds Plc) P S McEntee 11-0 ... K Gaule 54
(Red, yellow seams, red sleeves and cap)
111 3P56 INNER LIGHT 5 (Mrs P Salter) B Pearce 11-0 ... M Batchelor 90
(Red and black (quartered), red sleeves, black stars)
112 4P-3111 KATARINO 19 (C,S) (R Waley-Cohen) N Henderson 11-0 ... M A Fitzgerald [illegible]
(Brown, orange sleeves, quartered cap)
113 1111 KNIFE EDGE 39 (S) (Hon Mrs S Lawson) M J O'Brien (IRE) 11-0 ... T P Rudd —
(Brown, red cross of lorraine and sleeves, quartered cap)
114 3124 NEW BIRD 19 (S) (P Clinton) D Nicholson 11-0 ... R Johnson 106
(Red, white epaulets, black sleeves, red and white striped cap)
115 24 NUVELLINO 47 (Cockpit Crew) P Hobbs 11-0 ... R Dunwoody 95
(Yellow, dark blue chevron, diamonds on sleeves, yellow cap, dark blue diamond)
116 15 PIPED ABOARD 142 (S) (Mr & Mrs M B Jones) M Pipe 11-0 ... A Maguire 90
(Dark green and yellow (halved), sleeves reversed, dark green and yellow quartered cap)
117 1U2 SCARLET PIMPERNEL 19 (S) (R Hambro) N Twiston-Davies 11-0 ... C Llewellyn 124
(Pink, dark blue seams, pink cap)
118 1F211 SIMPLY GIFTED 19 (G,S) (S Hammond) T Easterby 11-0 ... L Wyer 126
(Red, white sash, emerald green sleeves, white armlets, emerald green cap)
119 2 STREET FIGHTER 58 (T Eaves) P Hobbs 11-0 ... G Bradley 77
(Light blue, yellow spots, sleeves and spots on cap)
120 1144P TAKE A TURN 71 (B,D,F) (Steel & Rail Conversions) Miss G Kelleway 11-0 A Thornton 102
(Royal blue, light blue sleeves, red armlets and cap)
121 325 THE GENE GENIE 89 (Fieldspring Racing) M Heaton-Ellis 11-0 ... B Powell 101
(Maroon, grey chevron)
122 20 MISS FARA 21 (BF) (Mrs C Painting) M Pipe 10-9 ... T J Murphy 74
(Pink, black star, armlets and star on cap)
123 211112 MISS ORPHAN 80 (BF,D,F,G,S) (S Taylor) M Pipe 10-9 ... R Thornton 113
(Royal blue, white braces, checked sleeves, royal blue cap, white star)

BETTING: 11-4 Katarino, 6-1 Dangerus Precedent, Knife Edge, Simply Gifted, 10-1 Afarad, Balla Sola, 16-1 Frozen Groom, 20-1 Ballysicyos, Scarlet Pimpernel, 25-1 Miss Orphan, 33-1 others.

1998: UPGRADE 11-0 C Llewellyn (14-1) N Twiston-Davies 2? ran.



GUIDE TO OUR RACECARD

101 113143 GOOD TIMES 13 (BF,F,G,S) (Mrs D Robinson) B Hall 12-0 B West (7) 88

Racecard number. Six-figure form (F—fell, P—pulled up, U—unseated rider, B—brought down, S—slipped up, R—refused, D—disqualified). Horse's name. Days since last outing, F if flat. (B—blinkers, V—visor, H—hood, E—Eyeshield, C—course winner, D—distance winner, CD—course and distance winner, BF—beaten favourite in latest race). Going on which horse has won (F—firm, good to firm, hard, G—good, S—soft, good to soft, heavy). Owner in brackets. Trainer. Age and weight. Rider plus any allowance. Timekeeper's speed rating.

2.35 BONUSPRINT STAYERS HURDLE (C4)
(Grade I: £57,500: 3m 110 yd) (12 runners)

201 132/052 ANZUM 19 (G,S) (Old Foresters Partnership) D Nicholson 8-11-10 ... R Johnson 137
(Dark blue and yellow stripes, white sleeves and cap)
202 /111-21 DEANO'S BEENO 54 (D,G,S) (Axom) M Pipe 7-11-10 ... A P McCoy [illegible]
(Dark blue, white sleeves, dark blue diamonds, white cap, dark blue diamonds)
203 /2144-1 GO-INFORMAL 19 (D,F,G,S) (Marshall, Owen & Griffin) J Jefferson 6-11-10 L Wyer 79
(Yellow, black stripe and armlets, hooped cap)
204 /440-13 JUYUSH 40 (G,S) (W Sturt) J Old 7-11-10 ... T J Murphy 142
(Dark blue and white check, dark blue sleeves, white cap, dark blue star)
205 20-3445 KERAWI 40 (G,S) (M Archer) N Twiston-Davies 6-11-10 ... C Llewellyn 140
(Light blue, maroon chevron, halved sleeves, white cap)
206 5-11111 LE COUDRAY 46 (G,S) (J McManus) A P O'Brien (IRE) 5-11-10 ... C F Swan —
(Emerald green and orange hooped, white cap)
207 111-P0 LORD JIM 19 (CD,G,S) (Mrs S Thomas) J Old 7-11-10 ... M A Fitzgerald 88
(Purple, yellow diamonds on sleeves, quartered cap)
208 1221336 OCEAN HAWK 19 (BF,D,F,G,S) (M Archer) N Twiston-Davies 7-11-10 ... C Maude 143
(Light blue, maroon chevron, halved sleeves, light blue and maroon quartered cap)
209 53-2F44 PADDY'S RETURN 54 (B,C,D,F,G,S) (P O'Donnell) F Murphy 7-11-10 ... A Maguire 102
(Emerald green, white hoops and sleeves, orange cap)
210 33-2011 TURNPOLE 30 (G,S) (Mr & Mrs W Williams) Mrs M Reveley 8-11-10 ... Mr A Dempsey 134
(Royal blue, yellow striped sleeves, royal blue cap, yellow star)
211 1-14111 LADY REBECCA 47 (C,D,F,G,S) Miss V Williams 7-11-5 ... N Williamson 160
(Brown, dark green sleeves, yellow cap)
212 1111211 SALLIE'S GIRL 19 (D,S) (J Shaughnessy) N Meade (IRE) 6-11-5 ... P Carberry —
(Maroon and white stripes, white chevrons on sleeves, striped cap)

BETTING: 11-10 Le Coudray, 5-2 Deano's Beeno, 7-2 Lady Rebecca, 20-1 Go-Informal, 25-1 Juyush, Sallie's Girl, 33-1 Anzum, Paddy's Return, Turnpole, 40-1 Kerawi, 50-1 Lord Jim, Ocean Hawk.

1998: PRINCEFUL 7-11-10 R Farrant (16-1) Mrs J Pitman 9 ran.

3.15 TOTE CHELTENHAM GOLD CUP CHASE (C4)
(Grade I: £149,600: 3m 2f 110 yd) (13 runners)

SEE ABOVE FOR CARD AND COLOURS

COURSE SPECIALISTS

TRAINERS	Wins	Rnrs	%	JOCKEYS	Wins	Rnrs	%
Miss V Williams	10	29	34.5	A McCoy	42	167	25.1
W P Mullins	5	18	27.8	N Williamson	33	155	21.2
R Barber	3	11	27.3	R Dunwoody	28	159	15.4
Mrs J Pitman	12	67	17.9	A Maguire	17	117	14.5
C Egerton	4	23	17.4	R Thornton	6	42	14.3
K Bailey	10	67	14.9	M Fitzgerald	19	152	12.5
M Pipe	44	299	14.7	R Farrant	5	41	12.2
J Old	8	58	13.8	C Llewellyn	16	132	12.1

BLINKERED FIRST TIME: Cheltenham: 2.00 Take A Turn. 3.15 See More Business. 3.15 Senor El Betrutti. 3.55 Tinotops. 4.30 Lake Kariba. 5.40 Ginger Fox. Hexham: 4.50 Timbucktoo. Lingfield Park: 2.20 Courtney Gym. 4.40 Shogun. 5.15 Famous.

3.55 CHRISTIE'S FOXHUNTER CHASE CHALLENGE CUP (C4)
(£19,250: 3m 2f 110 yd) (24 runners)

401 2/31-5U ANDERMATT 21 (G,S) (J Cornwall) J Mackie 12-12-0 ... Mr J R Cornwall 105
(Yellow, black chevrons, striped cap)
402 F114-12 ANDY BURNETT 33 (G,S) (Mrs S Forster) Miss S Forster 10-12-0 ... Mr C Storey 59
(Light green, yellow sash, yellow and white hooped cap)
403 4223-11 CALL HOME 25P (F,G,S) (Mrs L Ferrett) T Hills 11-12-0 ... Mr T Hills —
(Orange, royal blue star on body and cap, stars on sleeves)
404 111-111 CASTLE MANE 12 (D,G,S) (C Dixey) Mrs C Bailey 7-12-0 ... Mr B Pollock 77
(Royal blue, yellow cross belts, black cap)
405 P/33-61 CELTIC ABBEY 14 (CD,F,G,S) (G Powell) Mrs C Hardage 11-12-0 ... Mr D S Jones [illegible]
(Amber, blue hoop and collar, blue and white hooped cap)
406 /1F12-1 COOLE ABBEY 29 (F,G) (Mrs C Moore) Mrs C Moore 7-12-0 ... Mr M Bradburne 107
(Dark blue and red (halved), checked sleeves and cap)
407 1P45-12 DESTIN D'ESTRUVAL 21 (BF,G,S) Miss H Knight 8-12-0 ... Mr A Dempsey 44
(Royal blue and yellow stripes, white sleeves)
408 111/1-0 EARL BOON 25P (F,G) (J Keighley) R Barber 11-12-0 ... Miss P Gundry —
(Black, yellow stars, black sleeves, white armlets, yellow cap)
409 5221-11 ELEGANT LORD 39 (CD,F,G,S) (J McManus) E Bolger (IRE) 11-12-0 ... Mr P Fenton 94
(Emerald green and orange hooped, white cap)
410 PP21/21 FOREST FOUNTAIN 19P (G) (J Callow) J D Callow 8-12-0 ... Mr A Dalton —
(Red and grey (halved), red sleeves, grey armlets, red cap)
411 F22/121 IRISH STOUT 16 (G,S) (Mrs D Bradden) A J Martin (IRE) 9-12-0 ... Mr A Martin —
(Red, yellow spots, red sleeves, yellow cap)
412 1021-63 KING TORUS 142 (F,G,S) (R Vicary) V Dartnall 9-12-0 ... Mr J Jukes 73
(White, royal blue star, red sleeves, red and white hooped cap)
413 221-R32 LAST OPTION 17 (F,G,S) (R Tate) R Tate 7-12-0 ... Mrs F Needham 118
(Gold, maroon hoops, gold sleeves)
414 12/RU54 MISTER HORATIO 14 (G,S) (W Lewis) W Lewis 8-12-0 ... Mr M Lewis 82
(Red, yellow hoops, chevrons on sleeves, quartered cap)
415 1F423/1 MR BOSTON 21 (D,F,G,S) (M Oldham) R Woodhouse 14-12-0 ... Mr J P McNamara 40
(Black and white (halved), sleeves reversed, quartered cap)
416 4/2541/ SANDS OF GOLD 658 (D,F,S) (B Badland) C Nimmo 11-12-0 ... Mr L Lay —
(Royal blue, white star, red sleeves and a white cap)
417 14113-3 SATIN LOVER 29 (F,G,S) (D Hall) Mrs S Dent 11-12-0 ... Mr S Swiers 105
(Black and white stripes, chevrons on sleeves, black cap, white star)
418 111/1U2 STAG FIGHT 26P (BF,F,G,S) Mrs R Sheppard 9-12-0 ... Mr J M Pritchard —
(Royal blue, white disc, chevrons on sleeves, white cap)
419 111P-1F STALBRIDGE BILL 13 (CD,G,S) (L Jenkinson) J Dolman 9-12-0 ... Mr T Mitchell 104
(Emerald green and black (quartered), black and red hooped sleeves, emerald green cap)
420 11-F121 TINOTOPS 20 (B,C,D,F,G,S) (R Target) Mrs R Vickery 9-12-0 ... Mr L Jefford 114
(Yellow and black (quartered), yellow sleeves, black spots)
421 P11P-P6 TOM'S GEMINI STAR 12P (F,G) (G Carter) G Carter 11-12-0 ... Mr J Young 104
(White, red and white hooped sleeves, black and white hooped cap)
422 1112-21 VARYKINOV 33 (G,S) (M Rimell) M G Rimell 10-12-0 ... Mr M Rimell 121
(Purple, pink sleeves, green cap)
423 22213-5 JOY FOR LIFE 33 (G,S) (R Strange) Mrs B Strange 8-11-9 ... Mr S Strange 105
(White, royal blue star, royal blue sleeves, white armlets, white cap, royal blue star)
424 UU121-1 NETHERTARA 19P (F,G,S) (Cockerell Cowing) Mrs D Grissell 12-11-9 ... Mr C Vigors —
(Pink, dark blue cross of lorraine, quartered cap)

BETTING: 4-1 Castle Mane, 5-1 Elegant Lord, 6-1 Celtic Abbey, 8-1 Irish Stout, Varykinov, 10-1 Destin D'Estruval, Stalbridge Bill, 12-1 Last Option, Mr Boston, 20-1 Call Home, Coole Abbey, 25-1 others.

1998: EARTHMOVER 7-12-0 Mr J Tizzard (3-1) R Barber 11 ran.

4.30 CHELTENHAM GRAND ANNUAL CHASE CHALLENGE CUP
(HANDICAP) (£32,150: 2m 110yd) (15 runners)

501 21545U LAKE KARIBA 19 (B,BF,D,G,S) (P Barber) P Nicholls 8-11-10 ... J Tizzard 140
502 5-1351 FLYING INSTRUCTOR 33 (CD,F,G,S) (Mrs J Webber) P R Webber 9-11-7 ... J A McCarthy 144
503 112122 DINES 28 (BF,D,F,G,S) (T Chappell) P Nicholls 7-10-8 ... A P McCoy 147
504 1-2614 HURRICANE LAMP 40 (D,G,S) (Mr & Mrs F Welch) D Nicholson 8-10-7 ... R Johnson 145
505 3P-323 ANABRANCH 40 (D,F,G,S) (Mrs M Barker) J Jefferson 8-10-6 ... L Wyer 144
506 -13262 FORESTAL 48 (D,G,S) (B Maguire) J Howard Johnson 7-10-3 ... N Williamson 152
507 322144 INDIAN JOCKEY 118 (B,D,F,G,S) (S Mercer) M Pipe 7-10-2 ... C Maude 109
508 305-F3 SPACE TRUCKER 11 (D,F,G,S) (Mrs E Queally) Mrs J Harrington (Ire) 8-10-1 ... J R Barry —
509 6285-3 SUBLIME FELLOW 34 (D,F,G,S) (Rory McGrath) N Henderson 9-10-0 ... M A Fitzgerald 136
510 F-2411 COUNTRY STAR 34 (D,F,G,S) (Mrs S Tucker) E L James 8-10-0 ... L Cummins (3) 144
511 132231 DARTES CAVALIER 28 (D,F,G,S) (Evers Isle W Done) D Gandolfo 9-10-0 ... C Llewellyn 147
512 210-21 NOBLE LORD 117 (D,F,G,S) (J McCarthy) R Phillips 8-10-0 ... B Powell [illegible]
513 214534 AMBERLEIGH HOUSE 32 (D,S) (Ms A Dowd) M Hourigan (Ire) 7-10-0 ... P Carberry —
514 F52131 BALLESWHIDDEN 30 (D,G,S) (T Staunton) R Fahey 7-10-0 ... A Dobbin 133
515 441422 ROBINS PRIDE 21 (D,G,S) (G Weeks) C Popham 9-10-0 ... R Farrant 120

Long handicap: Sublime Fellow, Country Star, Dartes Cavalier 9-12, Noble Lord 9-3, Amberleigh House 9-8, Balleswhidden 9-3, Robins Pride 8-9

BETTING: 5-1 Noble Lord, 13-2 Dines, 7-1 Lake Kariba, Flying Instructor, Space Trucker, 8-1 Dartes Cavalier, 10-1 Anabranch, Country Star, 12-1 others.

1998: EDREDON BLEU 6-11-6 A P McCoy (7-2 fav) Miss H Knight 17 ran

Florida Pearl has golden qualities



IRISH VIEW

FLORIDA PEARL, trained to the minute by Willie Mullins, can fulfil all hopes and expectations by landing the Cheltenham Gold Cup (3.15) today. A winner at the meeting the past two years, his high cruising speed should allow Richard Dunwoody to lie handy before pouncing on the run up the hill. Elsewhere on the card, confidence in Knife Edge (2.00) and Le Coudray (2.35) is high.

5.05 CATHCART CHALLENGE CUP CHASE
(Grade II: £32,700: 2m 5f) (13 runners)

601 634111 DR LEUNT 19 (CD,G,S) (P Emery) P Hobbs 8-11-7 ... A Thornton [illegible]
602 -2F231 BOBBY GRANT 61 (G,S) (J Thompson) C Grant 8-11-3 ... R Johnson 128
603 1/1P-2 CHEVAL DE GUERRE 12 (BF,S) (John Stanley) K Bailey 8-11-3 ... G Bradley 126
604 11142- EDELWEISS DU MOULIN 334 (BF,G,S) (R Ogden) Miss V Williams 7-11-3 ... R Dunwoody 138
605 221211 HOH EXPRESS 40 (G,S) (Mrs J Egan) P R Webber 7-11-3 ... J A McCarthy 142
606 123224 MR STRONG GALE 19 (B,F,G,S) (T Chappell) P Nicholls 8-11-3 ... J Tizzard 153
607 -U111F NICK DUNDEE 1 (BF,D,S) (Mrs J Magnier) E O'Grady (Ire) 7-11-3 ... DOUBTFUL —
608 -01121 POTENTATE 19 (F,G,S) (J Weeden) M Pipe 8-11-3 ... A P McCoy 143
609 2-1331 STORMYFAIRWEATHER 22 (C,D,F,G,S) N Henderson 7-11-3 ... M A Fitzgerald 132
610 111F-P BENGERS MOOR 144 (D,F,G,S) (J Townsend) P Nicholls 8-11-0 ... T J Murphy 18
611 5P2440 GAZALANI 2 (G,S) (Miss R Stack) P Brady (Ire) 7-11-0 ... T P Treacy —
612 /21P11 NIKI DEE 40 (G,S) (G Dilger) P Beaumont 9-11-0 ... R Supple 136
613 122P1U CARLINGFORD GALE 2 (D,F,G,S) (Mr & Mrs D Gamble) T George 8-10-12 ... R Walley 119

BETTING: 3-1 Dr Leunt, 9-2 Potentate, 11-2 Edelweiss Du Moulin, 6-1 Mr Strong Gale, 12-1 Hoh Express, 14-1 Cheval De Guerre, 20-1 others.

1998: CYFOR MALTA 5-10-8 A P McCoy (9-4 fav) M Pipe 8 ran



5.40 VINCENT O'BRIEN COUNTY HANDICAP HURDLE
(Grade III: £29,750: 2m 1f) (30 runners)

1 232123 MASTER BEVELED 19 (BF,G,S) (Mrs E Williams) P Evans 9-11-11 ... A P McCoy 141
2 -41133 TOTO TOSCATO 24 (D,S) (Mrs H Clarke) D Nicholson 5-11-5 ... R Johnson 120
3 1-2421 DECOUPAGE 33 (G,S) (J Dean) C Egerton 7-10-13 ... N Williamson 154
4 23/U40 SHANKAR 33 (G,S) (International Plywood Plc) D Nicholson 8-10-9 ... D McPhail (5) 136
5 04-213 SERENUS 54 (G,S) (W, M & Mrs E Robins) N Henderson 6-10-7 ... A Maguire 140
6 04-855 BARNA BOY 97 (CD,G,S) (L Wilson) N Henderson 11-10-3 ... M A Fitzgerald 149
7 0P-450 BUDDY MARVEL 123 (F,G,S) (R Ogden) Mrs M Reveley 5-10-0 ... Mr A Dempsey (3) 126
8 111000 DANEGOLD 82 (D,F,G,S) (Circular Distributors Ltd) M Chanon 7-10-0 ... D Byrne 134
9 -0FP31 GINGER FOX 22 (B,G,S) (M Van Doorne) Mrs J Pitman 6-10-0 ... R Dunwoody 147
10 -14030 SADLER'S REALM 26 (G,S) (B D Racing) P Hobbs 6-10-0 ... R Widger (3) [illegible]
11 /12/11 ISMENO 28 (S) (Mrs A Underhill) D Elsworth 8-10-0 ... P Holley 154
12 12-152 SIR TALBOT 97 (S) (W Sturt) J Old 5-10-0 ... T J Murphy 131
13 411523 ONCE MORE FOR LUCK 30 (D,F,G,S) Mrs M Reveley 8-10-0 ... M H Naughton (5) 123
14 61-151 YOUNG SPARTACUS 26 (G,S) (B Hellyer) H Daly 6-10-0 ... R Farrant 149
15 -35364 AMITGE 33 (B,D,F,G) (P Lake & H Lake) M Pipe 5-10-0 ... C F Swan 153
16 8-1211 PREMIER GENERATION 19 (C,S) (Premier Generation) N Henderson 6-10-0 ... C Llewellyn 150
17 163301 FATEHALKHAIR 30 (D,F,G) (R Wagner) B Ellison 7-10-0 ... C McCormack (3) 143
18 -31020 SHANTARINI 68 (B,F,G,S) (Mrs G Donohoe) S Donohoe (Ire) 5-10-0 ... K Gaule —
19 42-020 ROAD RACER 47 (G,S) (P Garratt) P R Webber 6-10-0 ... J A McCarthy 109
20 1PPP-2 THE FRENCH FURZE 15 (C,D,F,G) (J Eustis) R Peacock 5-10-0 ... A Dobbin 136
21 -20551 EXECUTIVE DECISION 15 (B,S) (E Gaynor) P Nicholls 5-10-0 (7ex) ... Mr R Forristal (5) 142
22 4/11 SAMAKAAN 33 (S) (Lady Harris) Miss V Williams 6-10-0 ... S Kelly (5) 143
23 6-0410 VENT D'AOUT 33 (D,S) (Elite Racing Club) M Pipe 5-10-0 ... F Keniry (7) 125
24 1F224 RENZO 18 (S) (Glenthorn Ltd) J L Harris 6-10-0 ... D Gallagher 137
25 -P5043 SOUND APPEAL 47 (CD,S) (R & J Fidler) G McCourt 5-10-0 ... E Husband 122
26 210F-5 WALK ON MIX 25 (S) (High Street Racing) N Meade (Ire) 7-10-0 ... P Carberry —
27 4/5-45 HOME COUNTIES 19 (CD,G,S) (Mrs A Hartley) J Hetherton 10-10-0 ... D J Moffatt 55
28 11134 MEDAILLE MILITAIRE 26 (D,F,S) (J Hartnett) M Pipe 7-10-0 ... G Supple (3) 128
29 2-1116 KATHRYN'S PET 22 (BF,F,G,S) (B Brown) Mrs M Reveley 6-10-0 ... B Powell 128
30 5-113F INDIANA PRINCESS 100 (D,F,G) (Wentdale Racing) Mrs M Reveley 6-10-0 ... G Lee 167

Long handicap: Ginger Fox, Sadler's Realm, Ismeno, Sir Talbot 9-13, Once More For Luck 9-12, Young Spartacus, Amitge 9-11, Premier Generation, Fatehalkhair, Shantarini, Road Racer, The French Furze, Executive Decision 9-9, Samakaan, Vent D'Aout, Renzo, Sound Appeal, Walk On Mix 9-7, Home Counties 9-4, Medaille Militaire 9-2, Kathryn's Pet 9-1, Indiana Princess 9-0

BETTING: 5-1 Decoupage, 10-1 Sir Talbot, Premier Generation, 12-1 Ismeno, 14-1 Ginger Fox, Samakaan, Walk On Mix, 16-1 others.

1998: BLOWING WIND 5-11-6 A P McCoy (15-8 fav) M Pipe 27 ran



Call Equiname shows his class



CHELTENHAM FESTIVAL

By Alan Lee
Racing Correspondent

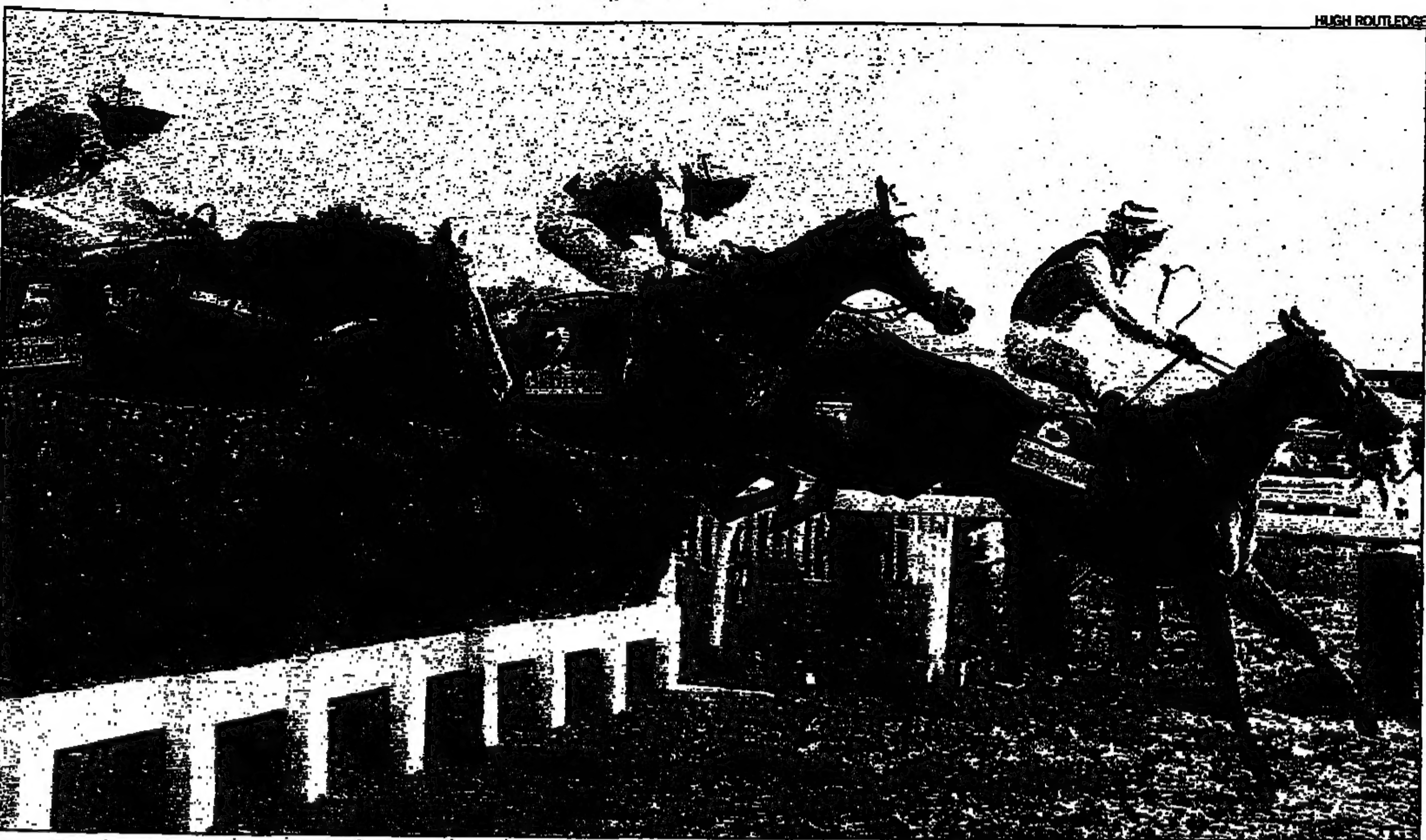
THEY said it was a weak race, a pale imitation of the epic two-mile championships won by Viking Flagship, Martha's Son and One Man.

But that was before Call Equiname, a horse with legs like china, offered a further tribute to the training skills of Paul Nicholls and enriched once more the memory bank of Cheltenham's most spectacular event.

Until Tuesday, Nicholls remained a Festival maiden.

Today's other racecards and yesterday's results, page 51

HUGH ROUTLEDGE



Edredon Bleu jumps the last ahead of the eventual winner, Call Equiname, and third, Direct Route, in the Queen Mother Champion Chase

Now, he has two winners and live prospects of a third in the Tote Gold Cup today. The prize-money earned here even makes it possible that one Somerset yard might depose another in the trainers' championship, for Nicholls is closing remorselessly on Martin Pipe.

Whatever else may surprise him about this week of fulfilment, the victory of the grey he calls "Ecky" in the Queen Mother Champion Chase was no more than Nicholls expected. From the seething grandstands, it was a desperately close thing as Call Equiname overhauled the valiant front-runner Edredon Bleu after the last fence and held on to win by a length and a quarter. Yet to the winning connections, it had all gone perfectly to plan.

"I thought this was my nap of the week. He's won all five of his chases and five out of seven over hurdles, so he is quite useful," Nicholls said blithely. "He also has to be held up to the last possible minute."

It was the need for such tactics that convinced Nicholls he should overlook his stable jockey, Joe Tizzard, and give the ride on Call Equiname to Mick Fitzgerald.

That Fitzgerald is also his brother-in-law was hardly the point. "I knew Mick's style would suit the horse," Nicholls said. "I feel sorry for Joe, but his time will come."

Tizzard retained an involvement, giving the previously quirky Green Green Desert a fine ride for fourth place. But with Hill Society failing to justify Irish confidence, it was clear from half-a-mile out that the finish would concern the leading three in the betting.

Direct Route, whose preparations had been delayed by the floods surrounding Howard Johnson's stables in Crook, loomed dangerously but faded as the relentless gallop of Edredon Bleu, the 3-1 favourite, saw off every challenger bar one. At his shoulder, waiting, waiting, sat Fitzgerald and Call Equiname.

A horse cannot achieve fame stood in his stable and Call Equiname has spent too much of his nine years idle. He suffered sore shins over hurdles, then broke down and needed pinfiring after winning his second race over fences. Nursed back, he won first time out last season, only to return injured again.

"We sent him away for an operation to implant tendons," Nicholls explains. "It seems to have done the trick." As Fitzgerald pressed the button and Call Equiname — part-owned by Nicholls's great mentor and patron, Paul Barber — wore down his rival, the merits of equine surgery can never have been better advertised.

Through his own frailty and misfortune, his restriction to four races spread over three seasons, Call Equiname has been deprived of the respect he deserves. All that may now change. So long as he is sound when Nicholls takes a deep breath and enters his box this morning, he will run over 2½ miles at Aintree next month.

Fitzgerald will not give up the ride without a family argument, and he knows how to argue. He says he talked Nicholls into giving him the mount and, after the race, he spent several minutes deep in conversation with the Queen Mother.

Doubtless, he was filling her with confidence for his next ride, on her own Easter Ross, but in this instance his mood was misplaced. To the distress of a crowd seeking a royal triumph, Easter Ross fell at the second in the Coral Cup.

Space Trucker to pick up the winning thread



GUIDE TO TODAY'S RACES

2.00: Not a great race for favourites, which is one of the few reasons to oppose **Katarino**. He sprinted clear of **Scarlet Pimpernel** at Kempton last time, but might prefer softer ground and preference is for **AFARAD**. Useful on the Flat, he looked an exciting hurdling prospect when winning at Leopardstown. **Knife Edge** is another who is not sure to appreciate the drying ground, while **Dangerus Precedent** has plenty of experience and will make a bold bid from the front. **Simply Gifted** won an uncompetitive race at Haydock and will find this much tougher.

2.35: **Le Coudray** has been shining in gallops with his stable companion, Istabraq, and as a result is a hot favourite. If he stays, he will probably win, but this is half-a-mile further than he has tackled before, and with the front-running **Deano's Beeno** in the line-up, it will be a thorough test. Deano's Beeno's only defeat in his past five starts came when beaten half-a-length by Princeful in the Long Walk Hurdle at Ascot, and he will be a tough nut to crack. **Lady Rebecca's** record at Cheltenham this season stands at four wins from four starts, so the course holds no fears for her, but this longer distance might. **ANZUM**, runner-up in this race two years ago, missed last season through injury but showed clear signs of a return to form when runner-up to Pharanear at Kempton last time. He will be one of the first to come under pressure, but stays forever and will relish this test.

3.15: **Florida Pearl** and **Teeton Mill** have grabbed the headlines in the run-up to this race, and as a result the betting has a lop-sided look. The latter won the King George in style, but there are real doubts about him staying up the final hill. Florida Pearl won the Bumper here two years ago, and the Royal and SunAlliance Chase last season. However, in the latter he looked like winning in style but found less than expected off the bridle and may, too, not appreciate the extra 1½ furlongs here. **Dorans Pride** has finished third in the past two renewals, but has had a lighter campaign this time and cannot be ruled out. Paul Nicholls runs both **Double Thriller** and **SEE MORE BUSINESS**. Double Thriller has the higher profile having beaten Teeton Mill in a hunter chase here last April, but See More Business makes more appeal at 14-1. Winner of the King George last season, he has been below par on his last two runs but is said to be working with his old zest now and can spring a surprise. **Simply Dashing** always gives his running here and has place claims, along with **Senor El Betrutti**, who was fourth last year.

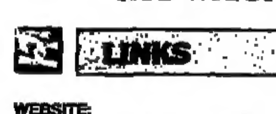
3.55: **COOLE ABBEY** has the class to win, but inexperienced **Castle Mane** is a big danger (Carl Evans writes). If it rains and the ground softens, Coole Abbey's speed would be blunted; that would suit Castle Mane, a horse of great potential. **Varykinov** and **Destin D'Estruval** should be in contention while **Last Option** will improve on faster ground.

4.30: This stiff two miles should be ideal for **Hurricane Lamp**, but his tendency to make mistakes may prove his undoing. **Anabranch** was returning from a break when caught close home by Mulligan at Doncaster on his penultimate start, and was not disgraced behind Edredon Bleu at Sandown last time. He should again make the frame, but **SPACE TRUCKER** will be hard to beat if putting in a clear round. Third in the Champion Hurdle two years ago, he is well handicapped here.

5.05: **Dr Leunt** will be favourite to complete a four-timer here. He was too strong for The Land Agent in the Racing Post Chase over three miles at Kempton last time, where **MR STRONG GALE** finished fourth. However, Mr Strong Gale failed to stay there, and holds Dr Leunt on earlier form over this course and distance in December, when the pair finished third and fourth respectively in the Tripleprint Gold Cup. **Edelweis Du Moulin**, having his first run for Venetia Williams, has to be respected.

5.40: The presence of **Master Beveled** at the top of the weights has kept all but eight of these out of the handicap, and made the race a little less competitive than usual. **Decoupage's** connections will feel that they were right to bypass the Champion Hurdle after Istabraq's peerless display, and the Tote Gold Trophy winner has solid claims. However, he may struggle to confirm the form with the fourth there, **AMITGE**, on 9lb worse terms. Fifth in the Triumph Hurdle last year, she makes plenty of appeal at 25-1 with Charlie Swan on board. **Barna Boy**, who loves Cheltenham, won this race two years ago and finished fourth last season. He should be thereabouts. **Sir Talbot** will be suited by the drying conditions while **Premier Generation**, a useful performer on the Flat, is potentially well treated, as is **Samakaan**, who has won both his starts for Venetia Williams, winning in good style at Wetherby and Haydock. He could be much better than he has shown.

ROB WRIGHT



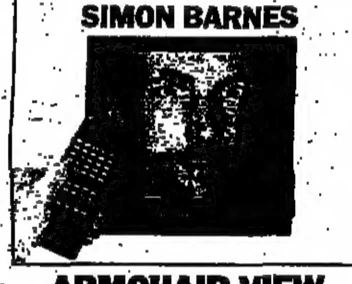
WEBSITE:
www.cheltenham.co.uk — dedicated site

TELEVISION:
The Afternoon Line (C4, 1.00pm): The Cheltenham Festival (C4, 1.30pm); Gold Cup Day at Cheltenham (C4, 8.00pm)

THE TIMES CHELTENHAM HOTLINES:
09064 700547 — Racecall commentary
09064 700548 — Racecall results
*calls cost 60p per minute

Afternoon that served a roller coaster ride

SIMON BARNES



ARMCHAIR VIEW

It is a standard rule of broadcasting: television does not capture atmosphere. It captures personality to perfection, and it captures action pretty well. But it does not capture atmosphere: and the more presenters go on about this fantastic atmosphere, the more we at home are untouched by it.

We are touched by drama, by incident, by brilliance, by triumph and disaster: but television lets atmosphere go. The fantastic atmosphere of the Last Night of the Proms is just funny hats; the fantastic atmosphere of the Cup Final is just people singing; the fantastic atmosphere of the Cheltenham Festival is just presenters laying it on with a trowel.

And then a change in mood so complete that even television picked it up. Norman Williamson asked for a mighty jump from Nick Dundee, the favourite and for many the banker bet of the meeting. The horse seemed ready to jump straight past his rival and sail home.

But the horse hammered into the fence and took an horrific tumble. Amid the gasp we saw Williamson jump to his feet and catch the horse as he began to run off, preventing him for doing himself any further damage: a splendid and instinctive piece of horsemanship. The name of the rival, who jumped cleanly and went on to win the Royal & SunAlliance Chase by a distance was Looks Like Trouble. Any horse, bought or bred for any reason, might be given the same name — certainly all the animals I have ever owned.

The horse went in to receive not Cheltenham cheers but genteel applause laid over shocked silence. It was a shock, not just of losing money, but of seeing another horse looking so marvellous — "So alive", as Brough Scott said with masterly mot justery — looking so near to death a second later.

Nick Dundee was taken away in a horse ambulance, which was at least better than the dreadful sight of the green screens. And Looks Like Trouble went to collect his prize in an atmosphere more of funeral than of festival.

They didn't try to soft soap us, the Channel 4 people, and that is something I have always admired in their coverage. It was a day when the person most misty-eyed about horses — me for example — could only have come to the conclusion that every horse looks like trouble. A number of images throughout the day made that point.

The Queen Mother had done all her stuff when presenting the trophies to winning connections after the Queen Mother Champion Chase, and it was coyly pointed out that her own mind might have been more on the following race in which she had a runner, Easter Ross.

It would have been a splendid thing had the horse won, and we would all have been writing God Bless You Ma'am pieces, and photographs of the winning and beaming owner would have been in all the papers. But the horse fell at the second hurdle, and — well, presumably Her Majesty is aware that any horse, no matter how brilliant, looks like trouble.

And after the second race and the usual joyous scenes, Scott had to tell us that a runner in the first, Glazeway, had "shattered" a leg and had been put down. The Cheltenham Festival is an intoxicating occasion that has more than its fair share of sobering facts.

But perhaps the fleeting image that got to me most concerned a horse called Or Royal in the Queen Mother Chase. The horse simply refused to race. You lot can go if you like: I'm staying here. It was funny all right, but I didn't laugh at all. I've been in a very similar situation myself, fortunately with slightly fewer people watching.

Horses can put you through the mill, emotionally: that is what this Festival is all about. The dismay of the falling Nick Dundee, the disappointment of the Queen Mother's horse, the death of Glazeaway: these are all as much a part of the Festival as the intoxication, the victories, the fantastic atmosphere.

But Or Royal tells you the rock-bottom truth about all horses.

Horses are wonderful — but by God, they can make you look a bloody fool.

Chance intervenes as Nick Dundee falls

By Chris McGrath

THOUGH it was not quite what the Irish had in mind when pinning shamrock to their lapels in the morning, they nonetheless acknowledged an authentic St Patrick's Day miracle at Cheltenham yesterday. For Nick Dundee, hot favourite to honour the occasion in the Royal & SunAlliance Chase, had appeared to lose far more than a developing duel with Looks Like Trouble when crashing into the third-last fence.

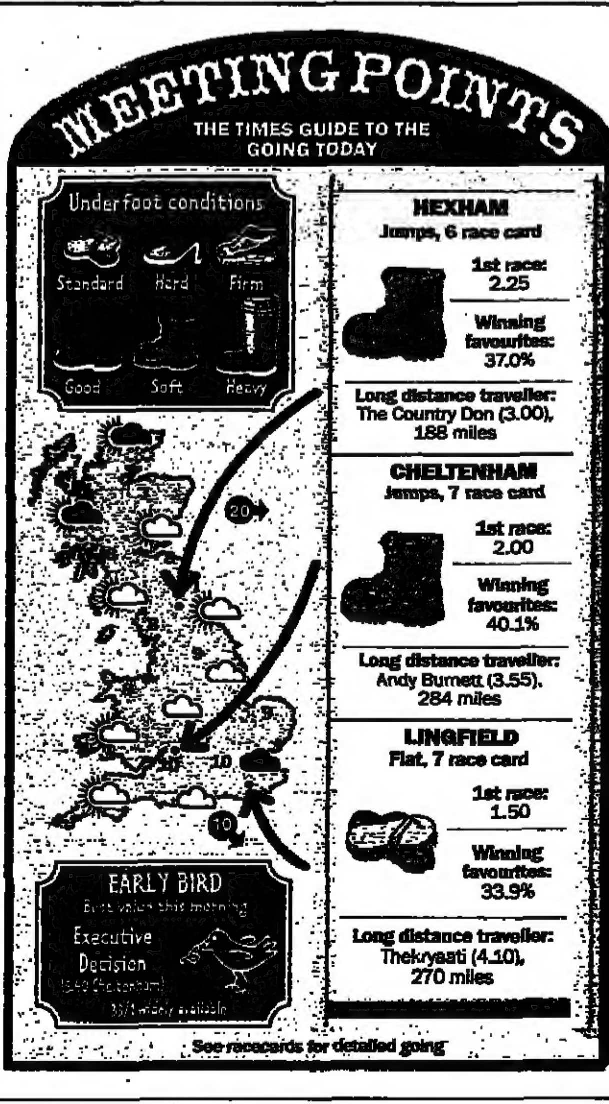
When he got to his feet, only three were functional. His left-hind leg dangled uselessly. Screens were erected to spare the packed grandstand too grisly a final memory of a novice so talented that he had nearly been switched to the Tote Cheltenham Gold Cup. Yet before long he could put enough weight back on his leg to walk into the equine ambulance. "He went straight throught the middle of the fence," Norman Williamson, his jockey, said. "I thought his leg was broken."

Veterinary examination suggests that Nick Dundee has chipped a cannon-bone or sesamoid. The question of whether he can race again will be unravelled with the bandages which heavily strapped his injury last night. Sharing a measure of his discomfort was the punter who struck a bet of £110,000 to £80,000, confirming this to be the fiercest of Festivals in the ring. The previous day Freddie Williams, who who laid that bet, had accommodated £100,000 each-way at 7-1 about Shannon Gale (who just made the frame).

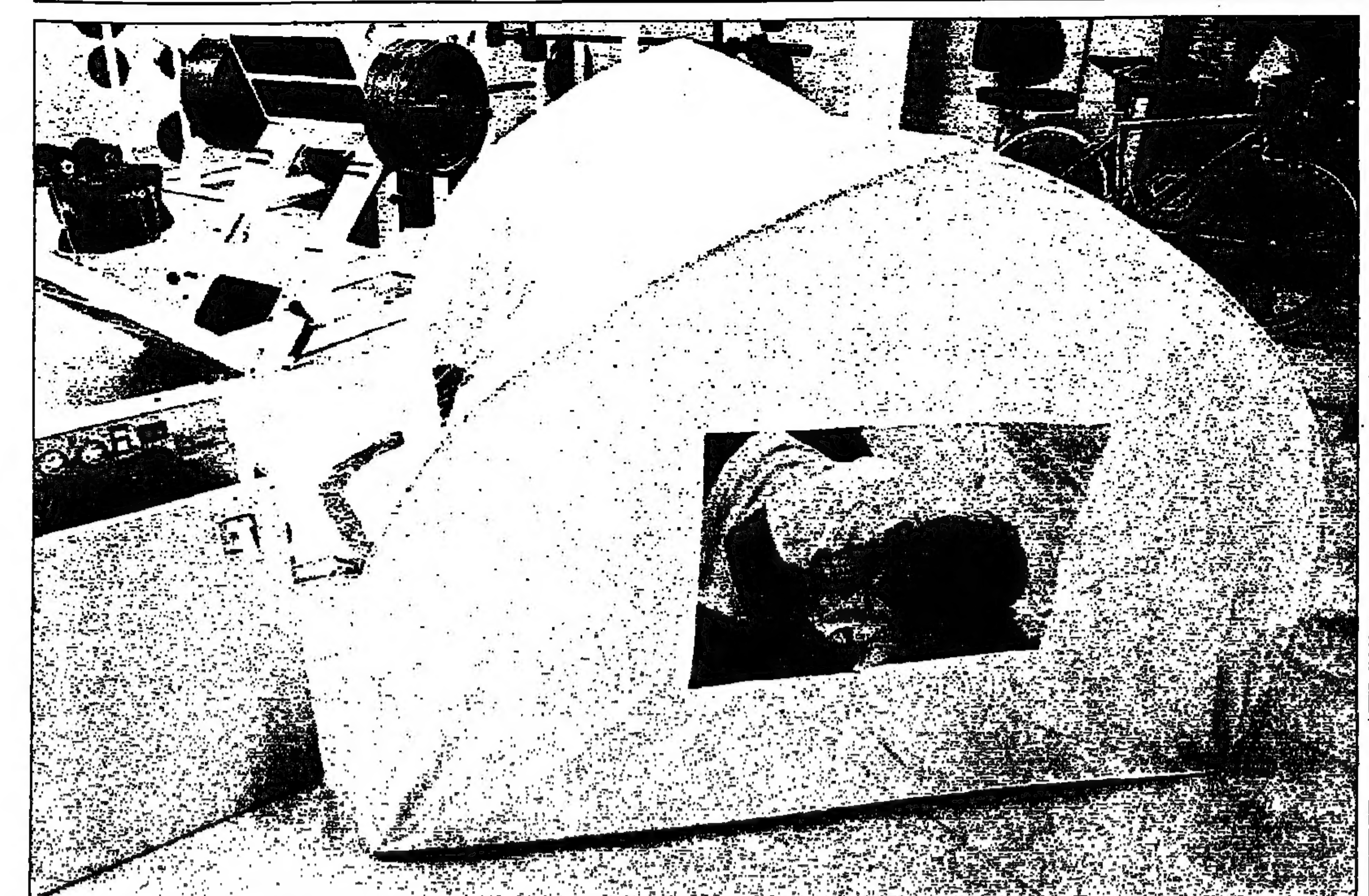
The stakes are higher on the course, however. Nick Dundee's misfortune was cruel vindication of his owner's decision to miss the Gold Cup. Nick Dundee was certainly going best and Looks Like Trouble — left a distance clear — looked lucky. But his trainer, Noel Chance, has become accustomed to wading against the tide since Mr Mulligan won the Gold Cup here just two years ago. "I know Nick Dundee was still on the bridle and maybe he would have found extra, but he has only ever been on the bridle and I know our horse would have found more," Chance said. "I shall now train him for next year's Gold Cup."

Chance is, of course, an exiled Irishman himself, while all seven races yesterday fell to Irish-born jockeys. St Patrick was most thoroughly honoured in the Coral Cup, where the first six home were trained in Ireland. Three of them shared a photo, headed by last year's runner-up, Khayrawani.

It was also a desperately close thing for Deejaydee, the card's other Irish winner in the National Hunt Chase. Tony Martin got him back up on the line for Michael Hourigan to be suitably emboldened over the Gold Cup prospects of Dorans Pride. But there was disappointment for the Florida Pearl stable, with Alexander Banquet finishing a tame seventh behind the impressive Barton in the Royal & SunAlliance Novices' Hurdle. It was touching to see many of Lorcan Wyer's northern colleagues in the winner's enclosure to hail his first Festival success since his amateur days 13 years ago. Dreams of next year's Smurfit Champion Hurdle — Ladbrokes offers 10-1 — will help keep Wyer, 34, showing up for work.







Sleeping partner: Wallace's tent simulates altitude, using the latest high-tech gadgetry in an attempt to improve performances on the track

Tent to take breath away



If you dream of the ultimate in lazy ways to get and keep fit, then this could be for you. The idea is that you get fitter and boost your endurance simply by lying in bed. It's the latest high-tech gadget to come out of sports science and it promises to turn your bedroom at home into a mountain top.

It was dreamt up by a British cyclist and engineer, Shaun Wallace, who lives and trains in the United States. He was a Great Britain Olympic team member in Los Angeles in 1984 and Atlanta in 1996 and twice broke the world record (amateur and professional) for the flying kilometre.

Since he left Nottingham University with a degree in engineering in 1983, Wallace has been a top competitor in cycling — a tough endurance sport in which many riders have been notorious for abusing the rules and their bodies by the illegal use of blood-doping and drugs — particularly EPO.

The aim of many of these outlawed procedures is to mimic the natural benefits that sportsmen get from living or training at altitude. Many sports, including cycling, swimming and running, are highly dependent on the body's ability to take in and metabolise oxygen and altitude training has been part of sport for years.

In some events, such as long-distance running, athletes from high-altitude countries such as Kenya and Ethiopia have dominated relentlessly. Time spent at altitude causes several adaptations to take place in the body, but probably the most significant is an increase in red blood-cell count. This knowledge sent athletes racing for the hills, but not only is altitude training expensive and inconvenient, but once you are halfway up a mountain it is impossible to train as hard and fast as you can at sea level.

> 'It can simulate altitudes up to 9,000ft'

The latest research shows that to get the best results you have to "live high" but "train low". Two years ago, scientists took a group of 39 competitive runners and split them into three groups. Thirteen lived and trained at sea level, thirteen lived and trained at 2,500 metres and thirteen lived at 2,500 metres but travelled down to 1,250 metres to train. The last group vastly outperformed the other two groups over a 5,000 metres run, with improvements of 40 seconds in 17 minutes.

Such research has led to a vogue among elite athletes to move to places such as Colorado Springs, where they can effectively commute up and down the mountains. The same theory lay behind the invention by Professor Igor Gamow of the Gamow Hypobaric Chamber, a claustrophobic coffin-like box that could provide athletes or moutaineers with the reduced air pressure experienced at altitude.

Another method of simulating altitude is to use cylinders of nitrogen to reduce the percentage of oxygen in the air. This procedure has been tried by Scandinavian Nordic skiers, who lived in quarters specially converted by the researcher, Heikki Rusko, to contain only 15.3 per cent of oxygen (compared with a normal 20.9 per cent.)



Wallace: riding high

After four weeks of the nitrogen treatment, the skiers' red blood-cell count rose by 7 per cent and their performances improved accordingly.

Wallace, in his attempts to go ever faster on his bike, has tried it all. "I've used altitude training as part of my preparation for years," he said. "I was always trying something new. For two years I used a hypobaric chamber, which I took to the Olympics in Atlanta.

"These things work well, but they're very hard to move around. So I started working with experts to devise an alternative — a portable tent that can be erected in minutes over any bed, at home, in a hotel, even at the Olympics.

"This time, rather than simulate altitude by reducing the pressure of the air, we have reduced the percentage of oxygen within it. This triggers the body to adapt and you literally increase your oxygen-carrying potential while you sleep."

> 'You can sleep two in it at the same time'

The tent, which folds to the size of a suitcase and weighs fewer than 70lb, utilizes hot-air balloon technology. It can fit a double or queen-size bed and once you have zipped yourself inside, you can still look out on the world through three large vinyl windows.

It is already proving popular among altitude-obsessed athletes. The British Cycling Federation has one and it has been tried by Britain's leading mountain-bike rider, Caroline Alexander.

Others who have been spending their nights in the magic tent include Paula Newby-Fraser, eight times the Hawaii Ironman world champion; the New Zealand cycle champion, Lee Vertongen; and the world champion triathlete, Michellie Jones.

The tent can simulate any altitude up to 9,000 feet and Wallace reckons that for best results you should spend six to eight hours a night in it for ten weeks before competition. And, yes, you can sleep two in the tent at the same time — as long as the bedroom is cool.

Whether the altitude tent really works is a matter of debate and needs some serious independent research. What might keep you awake at night is the price — it sells for $5,395 (about £3,375). But there are always plenty of athletes who will pay any price to get to the top of the mountain.

JOHN BRYANT

EQUESTRIANISM

Billington determined to make up for lost time

By JENNY MACARTHUR

A TIMELY telephone call has bolstered Geoff Billington's chances of qualifying for the World Cup final when he competes in the Dutch qualifier at 's-Hertogenbosch this weekend. Having misread the World Cup rules, Billington thought he was not allowed to ride his top horse, It's Otto, this weekend — because he has now competed in three qualifiers in succession — and was resigned to riding Niko, his second string.

"I was rung up on Monday by someone who knew the rules better than me and told that as there had been a two-week break between the Bologna and Paris qualifiers it was all right to continue with Otto," Billington said yesterday.

Although lying eleventh in the European League — from which the top 19 qualify for the final in Sweden next month — there are two more qualifiers to come and Billington needs points this weekend. His conspicuous failure to achieve any in Paris last weekend — where he incurred half a time fault in the opening round — has sharpened his resolve.

"I couldn't believe I had done that," Billington said. "It was only when I heard the crowd shouting 'Allez, allez' as I jumped the last fence that I realised I was slow. But we're going to put the job right on Sunday."

Robert Smith and John and Michael Whitaker make up the British complement at the event. Di Lampard, with Abbervail Dream, has had to withdraw because her father is ill. The foreign entry is headed by Ludger Beerbaum, of Germany, the European champion, who had a stylish win on Priamos last week in Paris.

The Whitakers will not be under pressure this weekend. Fifth and sixth in the league, they are virtually assured of their places at the final. Nevertheless, both aim to improve on their Paris results — where Michael had four faults on Ashley in the first round and John finished eighth — the best Briton — after a frustrating four faults in the jump-off on Virtual Village Heyman.

Smith, who has only one top horse — Senator For The Best — at the show, may not even compete in the qualifier. His sights are set on the Grand Prix — also on Sunday — in which he has the chance to secure a £35,000 bonus.

The event is part of a series that offers a bonus for the winner of two out of the three grands prix of Amsterdam, 's-Hertogenbosch, and Rotterdam in August. Smith won Amsterdam on Senator For The Best last November.

WORD-WATCHING

Answers from page 48

CARBONARI

(b) The members of a secret political association formed in the kingdom of Naples during the French occupation under Murat, with the design of introducing a republican government. In Italian the word means colliers or charcoal-burners. "In 1799, when driven to the forest of the Abruzzi the republicans are believed to have disguised themselves as charcoal-burners. In the course of 20 years the name Carbonari was borne by a society, or confederate societies, ranging all over Italy."

CITRUL

(b) The Water-Melon (*Cucumis Citrullus*). Also applied (both in French and English) to the Pumpkin. The Old French name from the 13th century. It comes from Latin *citrus*, so called from its colour. Sam Johnson, in his *Dictionary*: "Citrul, the same with pumpion, so named from its yellow colour."

CROMORNE

(c) A reed-stop on an organ. Also called Krummhorn and Cremona. A corruption of the German for "crooked horn". "Krummhorn, Cromorne, Cremona, Clarionet, Corno-di-Bassetto. An Organ Reed Stop of 8 feet size of tone."

CASTOR

(c) The beaver. From the ancient Greek, probably for a foreign word. The Sanskrit *kasturi* means musk. "The sacs are cut off from the castors when they are killed."

SOLUTION TO THE WINNING MOVE

Solution: 1 Be6+! Qxe6 (1 ... Kh8 2 Qxf8+! Qxf8 3 Rf7 is decisive) 2 Qxf8+ Kxf8 3 Rxc8+ Qe8 4 Rxe8+ Kxe8 5 Rxg7 and White easily wins the end-game.

TELEVISION CHOICE

Designs on a sporting life

Making It
BBC2, 7.30pm (not Scotland)

This engaging new series focuses on young designers, starting with two transport design graduates, Dean Carbis and Toby Birkenhead, fresh out of Coventry University. They have won a three-month attachment to update and rethink sports shoes for Reebok in Boston, which has been struggling against growing opposition from adidas and Nike. Dean's brief is to redesign the laced (and potentially dangerous) shoes used in motor racing, Toby is to tackle football boots for the New England Revolution team. From the moment they settle into their leafy, luxurious surroundings we follow their progress on the drawing board, and their interviews with footballers and drivers, about what they went through to the final launch of their prototypes.

Top Gear
BBC2, 8.30pm

The series returns in some style as the presenter Tiff Needell, driving a mightily powerful McLaren F1, sets a new British speed record. The car is clearly not for wimps: it is powered by a 6.1 litre BMW V12 engine. Needell's target is the 180.4mph record set by Colin Goodwin in a Jaguar XJ220S in 1995, on the two-banked bowl of Millbrook Proving Ground in Bedfordshire. And no, he doesn't make it first time — but he *does* eventually, hitting a top speed of more than 200mph. Also on the show: a new face (but familiar to viewers of Channel 4 and Channel 5) in James May, test driving the Rover 75 en route to Seville. Can this first all-new Rover car for 23 years turn its company's fortunes around?

Every Woman Knows a Secret
ITV, 9pm



Siobhan Redmond (centre) stars in *Every Woman Knows a Secret* (ITV, 9pm)

A three-part drama, based on the bestselling novel by Rosie Thomas. The "secret" shared by Jess (Siobhan Redmond) and Rob (Paul Bettany) is a love that dare not speak its name ... they are separated in age by nearly a quarter of a century and he was at the wheel of the car that plunged over an embankment, killing Jess's son. She, being divorced, had brought up the 20-year-old Danny on her own and refuses point blank to believe what the police are saying about his alleged assault and rape before the accident. So how, you might wonder, can this grief-stricken mother get it together with her son's "murderer"?

Horizon: New Asteroid Danger
BBC2, 9.30pm

Is there any truth in the notion — forget what Hollywood has shown us in films such as *Deep Impact* and *Armageddon* — that a doomsday asteroid could smash into the Earth and put paid to civilisation as we know it? It may have happened to the dinosaurs but, say scientists, it is unlikely that an asteroid of such size could appear again, at least in the foreseeable future. What about smaller chunks of rock from outer space? In Siberia, in 1908, one of these flattened 2,000 square kilometres of forest. And it is these smaller rocks which worry the scientists because they are the hardest to track. "This *means* we could lose a capital city such as Washington DC overnight with no warning," says one.

Elizabeth Cowley

RADIO CHOICE

Performance on 3
Radio 3, 7.30pm

The mezzo-soprano Sally Burgess is part of an impressive list of soloists in a performance of Verdi's *Requiem*, recorded last July at Symphony Hall in Birmingham, a venue increas- ingly visited by the microphones of Radio 3. Verdi's Mass is among the most-performed works on the classical manifest and the reasons for its enduring appeal are evident from the opening bars: this is a musical triumph and its ability to move the listener transcends religious boundaries and takes all who hear it into a sublime experience. For this performance Sir Edward Downes conducts the BBC National Orchestra and Chorus of Wales, augmented by the Mendelssohn Choir from Pittsburgh.

At the Beeb
Radio 2, 9.30pm

I have been resisting this series because the material in it is drawn from the BBC archives and that *seems* like too *easy* a way to fill up *half an* hour in the schedules. But I have been listening to it (when no one was around to notice) and because the history of broadcast comedy is inextricably bound up with that of the BBC there has been some fascinating material. Tonight the featured performer is Ronnie Barker, talking about "the best job in the world", which, he says, is getting paid to make people laugh. The programme is an entertaining reminder of the extent of Barker's comedy experience, from his beginnings with *The Frost Report* to *The Two Ronnies* and *Open All Hours*.

Peter Barnard

RADIO 1 (BBC)

6.30am Zoe Ball 9.00 Simon Mayo 12.00 Jo Whiley 2.00pm Mark Radcliffe 4.00 Chris Moyles 5.45 Newsbeat 6.00 Dave Pearce 8.00 Steve Lamacq: The Evening Session 10.00 Trade Update 10.10 John Peel. With a session by Tram 12.00 Andy Kershaw 2.00am Clive Warren 4.00 Scott Mills

RADIO 2 (BBC)

6.00am Alex Lester 7.30 Sarah Kennedy 9.30 Ken Bruce 12.00 Jimmy Young 2.00pm Ed Stewart 5.05 Johnnie Walker 7.00 David Allen 8.00 Paul Jones 9.00 Punt and Dennis: It's Been a Bad Week (6/6) 9.30 At the Beeb: Ronnie Barker. See Choice (2/4) 10.00 The Alan Price Set (2/6) 10.30 Richard Allinson 12.00 Katrina Leskanich 3.00am Mo Dutta

RADIO 5 LIVE (BBC)

5.00am Morning Reports 6.00 Breakfast 9.00 Nicky Campbell 12.00 The Midday News 1.00pm The Cheltenham Festival. Gold Cup action presented by John Inverdale and Clare Balding, with commentary and analysis at 3.15 of the big race at 4.00 Drive 7.00 News Extra 7.20 The Thursday Match: Valerenga v Chelsea in the Cup Winners' Cup 9.30 On the Line 10.00 Late Night Live 1.00am Up All Night with Rhod Sharp

TALK RADIO

6.00am The Big Boys Breakfast 9.00 Scott Chisholm & Sally James 12.00 Justice With Jacobs 1.00pm Anna Raeburn 4.00 The Sports Zone 7.00 Valerenga v Chelsea 10.30 James Whale 1.00am Ian Collins

VIRGIN

6.30am Chris Evans 9.30 Russ Williams 1.00pm Nick Abbot 4.00 Harriet Scott 6.45 Pete and Geoff 10.00 Mark Forrest 1.00am James Merritt 4.30 Richard Allen

BBC WORLD SERVICE

6.00am The World Today 7.00 World News 7.15 Outlook 7.55 My Century 8.00 World News 8.05 From Our Own Correspondent 8.20 Off the Shelf: Enduring Love 8.35 The Works 9.00 World News 9.05 Network 9.20 Andy Kershaw's World of Music 9.50 Sports Round-Up 10.00 Newsdesk 10.30 Britain Today 10.45 Performance 11.00 Newsdesk 11.30 Assignment 12.00 World News 12.05pm Outlook 12.45 Sports Round-Up 1.00 Newshour 2.00 World News 2.05 The Works 2.30 Meridian Books 3.00 World News 3.05 Sports Round-Up 3.15 Westway 3.30 The Greenfield Collection 4.00 World News 4.15 Insight 4.30 The Music Studio 4.45 The Lab 5.00 Europe Today 5.30 World Business Report 5.45 Sports Round-Up 6.00 World News 6.15 Britain Today 6.30 Assignment 7.00 World News 7.05 The Works 7.30 From Our Own Correspondent 7.45 Off the Shelf: Enduring Love 8.00 Newshour 9.00 World News 9.05 World Business Report 9.20 Britain Today 9.30 Meridian Books 10.00 World News 10.15 Sports Round-Up 10.30 The Music Studio 10.45 The Lab 11.00 World News 11.05 Outlook 11.45 Insight 12.00 The World Today 12.30am The Works 12.55 My Century 1.00 The World Today 1.30 Westway 1.45 Performance 2.00 The World Today 2.30 Focus on Faith 3.00 The World Today 3.20 Sports Round-Up 3.30 World Business Report 3.45 Insight 4.00 The World Today

CLASSIC FM

6.00am Nick Bailey's Easier Breakfast. A selection of rousing music to start the day 9.00 Michael Mappin. The Hall of Fame Hour and CD of the Week 12.00 Lunchtime Requests. Jane Jones presents favourite music 2.00pm Concerto. Weber (Clarinet Concerto No 1 in F minor) 3.00 Jamie Crick. Continuous Classics and Afternoon Romance 6.30 Newsnight. The latest headlines and sport updates 7.00 Smooth Classics at Seven. John Brunning introduces classic sounds 9.00 Evening Concert. Debussy (Prelude a l'apres-midi d'un faune; Nocturnes Nuages); Delibes (In a Summer Garden); Rabaud (La Procession Nocturne); Ireland (London Pieces); Debussy (Images pour orchestre) 11.00 Mann at Night 2.00am Concerto (r) 3.00 Mark Griffiths. The Early Breakfast Show

RADIO 3

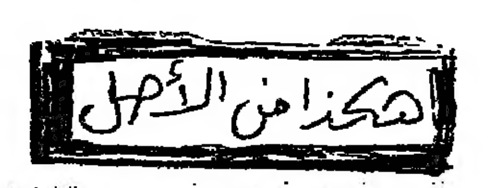
6.00am On Air With Petroc Trelawny. Poulenc (Aubade); Schumann (Kinderszenen); Walton (Spitfire Prelude and Fugue)
9.00 Masterworks With Peter Hobday. Schubert (Symphony No 5 in B flat); Debussy (Chansons de Bilitis); Rodrigo (Concierto pastoral)
10.30 Artist of the Week: Gillian Weir
11.00 Sound Stories: Medical Matters Beethoven died from cirrhosis of the liver
12.00 Composer of the Week: Strauss
1.00pm The Radio 3 Lunchtime Concert The Munich-based Rosamunde Quartet make their British concert debut. Webern (Langsamer Satz); Mozart (String Quartet in F, K168); Shostakovich (String Quartet No 8, Op 110)
2.00 The BBC Orchestras BBC National Orchestra of Wales under Ion Marin and Mark Wigglesworth. Barry Douglas, piano. Tippett (The Rose Lake); Rachmaninov (Piano Concerto No 3 in D minor); Brahms (Symphony No 4 in E minor)
4.00 Ensemble Penny Gore celebrates the extraordinary achievements of Haydn (r)
4.45 Music Machine with Tommy Pearson
5.00 In Tune Sean Rafferty explores the new production of Boito's *Mephistopheles* as it opens at English National Opera
7.30 Performance on 3 Edward Downes conducts Verdi's intensely dramatic and powerful setting of the Mass for the Dead in a concert given last July at Symphony Hall, Birmingham. Nina Rautio, soprano, Sally Burgess, mezzo, Dennis O'Neill, tenor, John Tomlinson, bass, Mendelssohn Choir of Pittsburgh, BBC National Chorus and Orchestra of Wales under Edward Downes. See Choice
9.00 Postscript: The Pas de Deux (4/5)
9.20 Haydn and Bartok Boris Berman, piano. Bartok (Six Dances in Bulgarian Rhythm; Mikrokosmos, Book 6); Haydn (Sonata in E flat, H XVI 52) (r)
10.00 Music Restored Lucie Skeaping introduces a programme of country delights, including a pastoral cantata by Hasse performed by Emma Kirkby, soprano, and London Baroque
10.45 Night Waves With a new collection of essays published this week in Britain, Alberto Manguel talks to Paul Allen about the nature of books and the place of literature in contemporary culture
11.30 Jazz Notes with Alyn Shipton
12.00 Composer of the Week: Delius (r)
1.00am Through the Night With Donald Macleod. 1.00 Sinfonia Varsovia under Jan Krenz. Krenz (Classical Serenade); Brahms (Symphony No 4 in E minor) 2.15 Constantin Regamey (Quintet. Miroslaw Pokrzywinski (clarinet), Grzegorz Golab (bassoon). New Warsaw Trio. 3.00 Schools: Music Workshop 3.20 Let's Move! 3.40 Words Alive! 3.55 First Steps in Drama 4.10 Listen and Write 4.35 Radio Showcase 4.40 Check It Out 5.00 Wolf (Italian Serenade) 5.15 Chopin (Scherzo No 2 in B flat minor, Op 31) 5.30 Schubert (Symphony No 5 in B flat)

RADIO 4

5.30am World News 5.35 Shipping Forecast
5.40 Inshore Forecast 5.45 Prayer for the Day
5.47 Farming Today Rural news with Charlotte Smith
6.00 Today with John Humphrys and Sue MacGregor
8.35 (LW) Yesterday in Parliament Political update
9.00 Melvyn Bragg: In Our Time Guests join Melvyn Bragg to consider ideas and events which have influenced the present age
9.30 Q & A Jez Nelson investigates the effect of neuroscience on perceptions of the human spirit
9.45 (FM) Serial: Letters From My Windmill (4/5)
9.45 (LW) Daily Service Director of music Alan Wilson
10.00 Woman's Hour Jenni Murray presents
11.00 Crossing Continents Isabel Hilton investigates the alarming rise in domestic violence and sexual abuse in Nicaragua, asking what has gone wrong since the Sandinista revolution
11.30 My Uncle Freddie by Alex Ferguson. Comedy set in Tyneside charting the relationship between a youngster and his uncle. With Shaun Prendergast and Gareth Brown (1/6) (r)
12.00 (LW) News Headlines; Shipping Forecast
12.00 (FM) News 12.04pm You and Yours Consumer news and investigations
1.00 The World at One with Nick Clarke
1.30 Open Country Richard Uridge presents from Lincolnshire
2.00 The Archers Yesterday's edition (r)
2.15 Afternoon Play: East Coast Line (Southbound) More travellers' tales from Lesley Glaister
3.00 Call You and Yours 0870 010 0444 Consumer justice programme, presented by Peter White
3.28 Radio 4 Appeal Robin Day speaks on behalf of the Epilepsy Research Foundation (r)
3.30 Carnival Tales Mark Rickards investigates the carnival in the Amazonian city of Belem
3.45 This Sceptred Isle Anna Massey narrates part 54 of the history of Britain (r)
4.00 Nice Work Alison Mitchell investigates the changing world of work
4.30 The Material World Trevor Phillips asks whether scientists should be held personally responsible for their discoveries
5.00 PM with Chris Lowe and Nigel Wrench
6.00 Six O'Clock News
6.30 Dear John Tribute to the satirist John Wells, author of *Private Eye*'s "Dear Bill" letters (r)
7.00 The Archers Ruth turns it up
7.15 Front Row The nightly arts programme
7.45 The Cry of the Bittern Part 24 of Tim Jackson's environmental drama. Broadcast earlier as part of *Woman's Hour* (r)
8.00 What If? Professor Christopher Andrew and guests imagine alternative events that could have transpired had King Alfred been defeated by the Vikings at Edington in 878 (2/4)
8.30 The Week in Westminster Steve Richards takes a look behind the political scenes
9.00 Leading Edge Geoff Watts reports on events at the cutting edge of science
9.30 Melvyn Bragg: In Our Time Broadcast earlier (r)
10.00 The World Tonight Presented by Robin Lustig
10.45 Book at Bedtime: Strait is the Gate David McKail reads the story by André Gide (4/10)
11.00 Late Night on 4: The Way It Is Satire and sketches with Simon Evans, Tracy-Ann Oberman and Dave Lamb
11.30 (FM) A Good Read Thomas Sutcliffe discusses three favourite paperbacks with guests Martin Bashir and Neil Bartlett (r)
11.30 (LW) Today in Parliament Update from Westminster
12.00 News 12.30am The Late Book: The Mask of Command Part four of John Keegan's account of the nature of leadership
12.48 Shipping Forecast 1.00 As World Service

FREQUENCY GUIDE. RADIO 1. FM 97.6-99.8. RADIO 2. FM 88.0-90.2. RADIO 3. FM 90.2-92.4. RADIO 4. FM 92.4-94.6; LW 198; MW 720. RADIO 5 LIVE. MW 693, 909. WORLD SERVICE. MW 648; LW 198 (12.45-5.55am). CLASSIC FM. FM 100-102. VIRGIN RADIO. FM 105.8; MW 1197, 1215. TALK RADIO. MW 1053, 1089.

Television and radio listings compiled by Perry Cleveland-Peck, Ian Hughes, Gillian Maxey, Jane Gregory and Barry O'Keefe



Us and them in the gardens of discontent

REVIEW



Joe Joseph

Even Herbert Beerbohm Tree — who once chided a too-queenly actress in an Egyptian drama: "Remember you're in Egypt. The 'skay' is only seen in Kensington" — might have winced at the mischievous way Vivianne Howard, in **Diana's Neighbours** (BBC2), portrayed every resident of Kensington as a rich, braying toff who can't open their mouth without a plum plopping out of it.

Did Howard decide to make this film about the proposed (and now shelved) £10 million Diana Memorial Garden in Kensington Gardens only after having found Mrs Ethne Rudd, secretary of the Kensington Society? Or was it just serendipity that, having planned to make the documentary anyway, she chanced upon a character who could serve as the perfect fulcrum for the telling of this see-saw tale? There's no getting around it: Mrs Rudd is straight out of Central Casting (here is Mrs Rudd inspecting flowers placed on Kensington Palace's railings on the anniversary of Diana's death: "A huge sunflower. How lovely! I wonder what that's meant to signify: we can all grow tall if we try!"). If you wanted to create one of those public service broadcasts to show the world that Britain is still an Us and Them society, then you would need to look no further than Howard's film.

By distorting and then exaggerating a stereotype, this documentary arouses the same emotions as a funny ethnic joke: you know you shouldn't laugh, but you can't help yourself. Howard's film is totally outrageous but hugely enjoyable. You have to peek at it through parted fingers. It's outrageous because Kensington Gardens are actually busy with bodies of every class, colour, race and religion; they're playing soccer, riding bicycles, sunbathing, skating, playing softball, reading, snogging, talking, playing guitars, sleeping, walking dogs, collecting conkers, playing with their children, or just getting some fresh air. But Howard, luckily, found none of these people.

Instead she found Mrs Rudd. And her friend Brian Sewell, the art critic, who has turned enunciating vowels into a cruel blood sport: "Kensington Gardens are part of my life. In my childhood, during the war, there were sheep grazing here. I learnt the facts of life in these gardens, because as one trundled around during the war, the place was full of soldiers and young women who were doing it here instead of shop doorways. Kensington Gardens means a great deal to me. It's an integral part of my life and I don't want some nincompoop appointed by the Chancellor — who is not a Londoner, but another bloody Scotsman throwing his weight about town here — changing it."

Remarkably, after hearing this diatribe, there wasn't a spontaneous, spiteful decision to turn Kensington Gardens into a giant amusement arcade with 24-hours-a-day bumper cars and hot-dog stalls every five yards: instead Gordon Brown and his Diana Memorial Committee agreed to abandon the 27-acre garden in favour of sprucing up the park's already existing children's playground. Actually, this was probably the correct decision. A formal garden just in front of the palace gates would have made Kensington Gardens far stuffier than you might think it already is after seeing Diana's Neighbours; and the traffic is thick enough down Kensington High Street without coach parties adding to the chaos.

But in case these arguments still lacked enough punch, Sewell was on hand — like the bruiser who's just given someone a thrashing and is hovering threateningly with his baseball bat, just in case his victim has any thoughts of getting up off the floor — to seal the case for the prosecution. "It seems to me an appalling thought," he said, his nostrils flaring like a stallion's, "that the man who saw to the washing of the Princess's knickers should now dictate to the rest of the nation that the garden should be so abused." You assume the "man" he was referring to was Paul Burrell, Diana's butler — then still on the Memorial Committee. Unless Sewell meant Gordon Brown. You may snort, but you can't put anything past that Brian.

I'll bet if Brian Sewell had been overseeing the restoration work on Home House, a dilapidated 18th-century Robert Adam palace just behind Selfridges that has just been turned into a lush private members' club, the builders would have got the plastering and painting finished in time for the opening night party. Either that or they would have killed him.

Probably killed him. So it's lucky that the man the builders had to deal with was actually the genial former restaurant manager Brian Clivaz: although maybe not lucky for Brian Clivaz. In **Trouble At the Top: Restoration Comedy** (BBC2) — a sort of grander *Changing Rooms*, only without Carol Smillie grinning at us like a toothpaste commercial — Clivaz showed remarkable good humour in adversity. Missed deadlines, floods, no kitchen, no bar, no heating, no takings to show his investors: although Clivaz, caught between builders and backers, confessed that occasionally he "plunged into the depths of despair", he mostly maintained a perkiness that must be the result of an irrepressibly optimistic disposition: if not that, then of amphetamines.

Clivaz was finding that being screwed from both ends was painful at about the same time that Carrie and her chic Manhattan friends in **Sex and the City** (Channel 4) were wondering if threesomes were the most fun you could have in bed. They discovered what most of us have known for a while: that sex between two people can be a beautiful experience; providing, of course, you get between the right two people.

BBC1

6.00am Business Breakfast (32760)
7.00 BBC Breakfast News (T) (34895)
9.00 Kilroy (T) (2420963)
9.45 Wipeout (3696168)
10.10 The Vanessa Show (T) (7319302)
10.55 News; Weather (T) (3979789)
11.00 Change That (3689166)
11.25 Can't Cook, Won't Cook (T) (3959925)
11.55 News; Weather (T) (7837963)
12.00 Call My Bluff (56128)
12.30pm Top Tip Challenge (r) (4403321)
12.55 The Weather Show (T) (53547321)
1.00 One O'Clock News (T) (17334)
1.30 Regional News; Weather (59476296)
1.40 Neighbours Karl prepares for his career change (T) (35516654)
2.05 Ironside (r) (5737499)
2.55 Through the Keyhole (r) (T) (1516514)
3.25 Children's BBC: Playdays (6373296) 3.45 Pocket Dragon Adventures (5928147) 3.55 Anthony Ant (9658079) 4.10 The All New Popeye Show (6893673) 4.20 Home Farm Twins (6648895) 4.35 Short Change (3957499) 5.00 Newsround (4612925) 5.10 Grange Hill (9309012)
5.33 Rewind (T) (169383)
5.35 Neighbours (r) (T) (588128)
6.00 Six O'Clock News; Weather (T) (147)
6.30 Regional News Magazine (499)
7.00 Watchdog, with Anne Robinson Consumer investigation show, putting some of the biggest names on the high street under the spotlight (T) (9296)
7.30 EastEnders Frank confides in Roy (T) (383)
8.00 Harbour Lights A leisure development is threatened by pollution and Steve Blade suspects his brother may have something to do with it (T) (804876)
8.50 Points of View Viewers' opinions on recent programmes (T) (722741)
9.00 Nine O'Clock News; Regional News; Weather (T) (5215)
9.30 Playing the Field Angie investigates an alleged benefit fraud (T) (273944)
10.20 They Think It's All Over Again Sports quiz (r) (T) (832128)
10.50 Question Time With Oona King and Lord Norman Tebbit (T) (9214037)



There's romance for Robert De Niro and Meryl Streep (11.55pm)

11.55 Falling in Love (1984) Romantic drama, starring Robert De Niro and Meryl Streep as commuters who meet on a train and are tempted to start an affair — despite both being married. Directed by Ulu Grosbard (T) (679609)
1.35am Weather (1250345)
1.40 BBC News 24 (69550884)

WALES: 10.50 What's In It for Me? (539321) 11.20 Question Time (T) (302963) 12.25am FILM: Falling in Love (T) (943093) 2.05 News (T) (9452971) 2.10 BBC News 24 (95591819)

BBC2

7.00am Children's BBC Breakfast Show: Pingu 7.05 Teletubbies 7.30 Snorks 7.50 Blue Peter 8.20 Tax-Mania 8.40 Polka Dot Shorts 8.50 Wishing 9.00 Wise Up 9.10 Job Bank 9.20 Job Bank 9.30 Watch 9.45 Come Outside 10.00 Teletubbies 10.30 Storytime 10.45 The Experimenter 11.05 Space Ark 11.15 Zig Zag 11.35 Pathways of Belief 11.50 Mad About Music 12.10pm English File 12.30 Working Lunch 1.00 Wishing
1.10 War Walks The history of British and Irish warfare (r) (T) (41604692)
1.40 Hart-Davis on History The reputation of Richard III (35537147)
2.10 Awash with Colour (56397296)
2.40 News; Weather (T) (3141586)
2.45 Westminster (T) (451760)
3.25 News; Weather (T) (4681012)
3.30 The Village (r) (9318944)
3.55 Kaya Advice show (9326963)
4.25 Ready, Steady, Cook (T) (6012708)
4.55 Esther Celibacy (T) (5097789)
5.30 Whose House? (876)
6.00 Star Trek: Deep Space Nine Dax is kidnapped and accused of committing murder (r) (417418)
6.45 Quantum Leap Sam becomes an English professor (r) (T) (828895)
7.20 CHOICE Making It New documentary series set in the competitive world of design (T) (925)
8.00 Fred Dibnah's Industrial Age The nation's favourite steeplejack charts the development of the railways (T) (6586)



James May joins the team for the first of a new series (8.30pm)

8.30 CHOICE Top Gear New series. Tiff Needell attempts to break the British record for fastest lap by a production car (T) (8321)
9.00 Red Dwarf Kryten sets up his own pirate TV station (T) (3857)
9.30 CHOICE Horizon New evidence which suggests an asteroid could strike the Earth (T) (271586)
10.20 Tales of Tools Two artists who depend on the drill (T) (337383)
10.30 Newsnight (T) (280654)
11.15 Late Review With Allison Pearson and Tony Parsons (331012)
11.55 Skiing Forecast (528654)
12.00 Despatch Box (33567)
12.30am BBC Learning Zone: Open University: Playing Safe 1.00 New York and Los Angeles 2.00 Further Education: The Key to the Application of Number 2 4.00 Teaching Film and Media 4.30 Marketing Movies 5.00 Teaching Today Special 5.45 Reflections on a Global Screen 6.10 Reading the Landscape

WALES: 7.30pm Fred Dibnah's Industrial Age (T) (925) 8.00-8.30 A Welsh Herbal (6586)

HTV

5.30am ITV Morning News (78050)
6.00 GMTV (5684321)
9.25 Trisha (T) (8816050)
10.30 This Morning (T) (44438944)
12.15pm HTV News (T) (4926586)
12.30 ITV Lunchtime News (T) (4405789)
12.55 Shortland Street Rachel prepares to speak out (9832499)
1.30 Home and Away Vinnie convinces himself that he has psychic powers (T) (35545166)
1.55 The Jerry Springer Show Outrageous American talk show (T) (1383370)
2.40 Wheel of Fortune (T) (5116578)
3.10 ITV News Headlines (T) (4660383)
3.15 HTV News (T) (4669654)
3.20 CITV: Mopatop's Shop (4680147) 3.30 The Adventures of Dawdle (9633760) 3.40 The Sylvester and Tweety Mysteries (5914944) 3.50 Lavender Castle (9644876) 4.05 Hey Arnold! (6005418) 4.30 Children's Ward (550)
5.00 Home and Away (r) (T) (4128)
5.30 WEST: Pleasure Guide Magazine covering the region's entertainment, from theatre and arts to films and videos. Presented by Dave Mason and Vanessa Bewley (483234)
5.30 WALES: Crazy Creatures The National Canine Defence League (T) (483234)
5.36 HTV Crimestoppers (573296)
5.58 HTV Weather (173586)
6.00 HTV News (T) (215)
6.30 ITV Evening News; Weather (T) (895)
7.00 Emmerdale Andy's fate is decided (T) (7692)
7.30 WEST: We Can Work It Out Judy Finnigan and the team investigate how the roof fell in on a wedding anniversary holiday (609)
7.30 WALES: Wales This Week Current affairs issues (609)
8.00 The Bill There's a general air of relief at Sun Hill now that Quinnan's on the mend — but Garfield continues to blame Boulton for the incident (T) (8031)
9.00 CHOICE Every Woman Knows a Secret New three-part drama series starring Siobhan Redmond (1/3) (T) (8895)
10.00 WEST: The Truth About Men Celebrities including Alan Davies, Shane Richie, Les Dennis, Clive Sinclair, Sean Hughes and Michael Winner divulge their innermost thoughts (T) (8654)
10.00 WALES: In the Company of Strangers New series. Murder mystery, starring Robert Pugh (1/3) (8654)
11.00 ITV Nightly News; Weather (T) (717168)
11.20 HTV News and Weather (T) (762741)
11.30 WEST: A Trip in the Cosmic Buggy Weston-super-Mare's pub and club scene (85031)
11.30 WALES: We Can Work It Out (85031)
12.00 WEST: Public Morals Corinne's boyfriend is arrested (r) (20093)
12.00 WALES: Tales from the Darkside All a Clone by the Telephone, starring Harry Anderson (20093)
12.30am The Jerry Springer Show (7355068)
1.15 Trainspotters New series. Licia Graves and Colin Rothbart deliver the latest sounds from the club scene in Northern Ireland and Southend (1/13) (607857)
2.15 Pop Down the Pub (9141587)
2.40 Box Office America Top 10 US movie releases (9536987)
3.10 Cybernet Computer news (47112109)
3.40 Murder, She Wrote A department store becomes a murder site just as it's about to be sold to a museum (6075345)
4.30 Coach Doris tries to get the team to move (46389513)
4.55 ITV Nightscreen Behind the scenes of ITV programmes (3209161)

CENTRAL

As HTV West except:
12.20-12.30pm Central News (7164654)
12.55 Home and Away (4413708)
1.25 The Jerry Springer Show (4078302)
2.10-2.40 Echo Point (56317050)
3.15-3.20 Central News; Weather (4669654)
5.30 Shortland Street (302)
6.00-6.30 Central News at Six (215)
11.20-11.30 Central News; Weather (762741)
11.30-12.35 Wonderful You (110079)
1.20-2.15am Highlander (4795109)
2.40 T in the Park (8106971)
3.35 Cybernet (25908172)
4.05 Central Jobfinder '99 (1707529)
5.20-5.30 Asian Eye (3211838)

WESTCOUNTRY

As HTV West except:
12.15-12.27pm Westcountry News; Weather (4926586)
12.27-12.30 Illuminations (7172673)
12.55-1.25 Westcountry Lunchtime Live (4413708)
1.25 The Jerry Springer Show (4078302)
2.10-2.40 Home and Away (56317050)
3.15-3.20 Westcountry News; Weather (4669654)
4.59-5.00 Birthday People (7775505)
5.30 Dig It With Den (302)
6.00-6.30 Westcountry Live; Weather (215)
11.20-11.30 Westcountry News; Weather (762741)
11.30-12.30 Wonderful You (25505)

MERIDIAN

As HTV West except: 12.15pm-12.30 Meridian News; Weather (4926586) 5.30 Ridgeriders (1/4) (T) (302) 6.00-6.30 Meridian Tonight (T) (215) 7.29-7.30 Meridian Weather (836963) 11.20 Meridian News; Weather (T) (414692) 11.35-12.30 Fitz (T) (797654) 5.00am-5.30 Freescreen (T) (53118)

ANGLIA

As HTV West except: 12.19pm Anglia Air Watch (7183789) 12.20-12.30 Anglia News and Weather (7164654) 5.25-6.00 About Anglia (8985876) 6.00-6.30 Anglia News (T) (215) 11.19 Anglia Air Watch (111128) 11.20 Anglia News and Weather (T) (762741) 11.30 Crime Night (816296) 11.45-12.00 The Ticket (r) (844079)

S4C

Starts: 5.55am Sesame Street (r) (20067166) 7.00 The Big Breakfast (67759825) 9.00 Ysgolion: History in Action (29019876) 9.20 Geographical Eye (29099012) 9.40 Place and People (42123383) 10.00 Middle English (91459895) 10.20 Fourways Farm (14962383) 10.30 Scientific Eye (51401944) 10.50 What the Papers Said (19660483) 11.00 The Number Crew (40758215) 11.10 Pitch Fever (79064234) 11.30 Powerhouse (T) (68101505) 12.00 Sesame Street (T) (97980673) 12.30pm Planed Plant (T) (26715418) 1.00 The Afternoon Line (67752012) 1.30 The Cheltenham Festival (64989505) 4.30 Ricki Lake (T) (67093215) 5.00 Planed Plant (90078741) 5.30 Countdown (T) (67017895) 6.00 Newyddion 6 (T) (93333128) 6.10 Heno (T) (86816031) 7.00 Pobol y Cwm (T) (90098505) 7.30 Newyddion (T) (67094944) 8.00 Slaymaker (T) (90074925) 8.30 Pam Fi Duw? (T) (90086760) 9.00 I dot (37245166) 10.00 Father Ted (T) (72550418) 10.35 Friends (T) (35648321) 11.05 The 11 O'Clock Show (88361418) 11.35 King of the Hill (T) (92134383) 12.05am Gold Cup Day at Cheltenham (71244529) 12.35 4 Later; Prey (99861797) 1.30 Dispatches (T) (10134190) 2.05 Diwedd

CHANNEL 4

5.55am Sesame Street (4158418)
7.00 The Big Breakfast (27505)
9.00 Schools: History in Action (T) (4293925) 9.20 Geographical Eye Over Asia (T) (4213789) 9.40 Place and People (T) (1433234) 10.00 Middle English (T) (9624708) 10.20 Fourways Farm (T) (5917050) 10.30 Scientific Eye (T) (1437654) 10.50 What the Papers Said (8707925) 11.00 The Number Crew (T) (9390296) 11.10 Pitch Fever (3140128)
11.30 Powerhouse (9418)
12.00 Sesame Street (T) (72166)
12.30pm Bewitched (r) (T) (90050)
1.00 The Afternoon Line Racing tips (20692)
1.30 The Cheltenham Festival Brough Scott introduces live action on Gold Cup day, comprising the 2.00 Elite Racing Club Triumph Hurdle, 2.35 Bonusprint Stayers' Hurdle, 3.15 Tote Cheltenham Gold Cup Chase and the 3.55 Christie's Foxhunter Chase Challenge (741857)
4.30 Countdown (T) (3974166)
4.55 Ricki Lake (T) (5082857)
5.30 Pet Rescue (T) (944)
6.00 Friends Ross makes the big mistake of letting Rachel in on his most secret sexual fantasy (r) (T) (857)
6.30 Hollyoaks Tony decides to make more of an effort (T) (437)
7.00 Channel 4 News; Weather (T) (705505)
7.55 Bodyscapes (603857)
8.00 Gold Cup Day at Cheltenham Highlights of the prestigious event (1654)
8.30 Wild Tales The continuing survival of crocodiles and alligators (T) (4019)
9.00 Ramsay's Boiling Point Gordon Ramsay prepares a banquet for 650 people at the Palace of Versailles on the eve of the World Cup (4/5) (T) (8925)
9.30 Dispatches A report revealing shocking allegations that the police have manipulated crime figures (T) (87586)



Dennis Franz returns as the gritty detective Andy Sipowicz (10pm)

10.00 NYPD Blue New series. The team investigate the murder of a hotel magnate's son (T) (6296)
11.00 The 11 O'Clock Show (3470)
11.30 Ally McBeal Fish delegates Ally, Cage and Georgia to a case with a man who wants to marry two women (r) (T) (23147)
12.30am 4 Later Introduction; Prey (7416613)
1.25 Vids Offbeat video review (9177451)
2.00 Late Toon: Everybody's Pregnant Animation (8450567)
2.10 NYPD Blue Simone and Sipowicz investigate a woman's claim that her mentally disabled daughter was raped, while a strange character is thought to be involved in murder (r) (T) (7810074)
3.00 St Elsewhere Westphall renews an old friendship (r) (T) (8047529)
3.50 Poor Cow (1967) Ken Loach's kitchen-sink drama about a young mother living in squalor with her good-for-nothing husband (T) (539426)
5.30 Britain at War (r) (4531109)

CHANNEL 5

6.00am 5 News and Sport Headline round-up (8753186)
7.00 WideWorld Part 20. The benefits of sport and exercise (r) (T) (8865079)
7.30 Milkshake! (2380505)
7.35 Wimzie's House (r); 5 News Update (4369234)
8.00 Havakazoo (r) (2582857)
8.30 Dappledown Farm (r); 5 News Update (2581128)
9.00 Holiday Park The day of Jane's party arrives but the whole event is threatened by an unwelcome visitor (r) (2505708)
9.30 The Oprah Winfrey Show (r) (4180055)
10.20 Sunset Beach Francesca plots against Cole and Caitlin (T) (3338418)
11.10 Leeza (5319447)
12.00 5 News at Noon (T) (2585944)
12.30pm Family Affairs Pete plans to get his own back on Dave (r) (T); 5 News Update (1963166)
1.00 The Bold and the Beautiful Clarke reveals all to Sally (T) (8857050)
1.30 The Roseanne Show Outrageous chat with the outspoken comedian (r); 5 News Update (1962437)
2.00 100 Per Cent Gold (9841166)
2.30 Good Afternoon An hour of leisure, lifestyle and documentary, featuring real-life soap *Liverpool Mums*, Rob Butler's word game *Cryptogram* and *Selling the Family Silver*, 5 News Update (1449654)
3.30 The Pursuit of DB Cooper (TVM 1981) Fact-based thriller, starring Treat Williams as the crook who held a plane to ransom and escaped by parachute with more than $200,000. Robert Duvall co-stars. Directed by Roger Spottiswoode (8685147)
5.25 5 News (41842906)
5.30 100 Per Cent (2188234)
6.00 5 News; Weather (2185147)
6.30 Family Affairs Dave tries to get the better of Pete (T) (2176499)
7.00 European Cup Winners' Cup Valerenga v Chelsea (kick-off 7.30pm). Full coverage of the Cup Winners' Cup quarter-final second-leg in Oslo. Subsequent programmes subject to change (T) (50579760)
9.35 Magnum Force (1973) Clint Eastwood, reprising his role as the maverick San Francisco police inspector "Dirty" Harry Callahan, upsets his superiors once more by setting out to hunt down a vigilante group responsible for cold-bloodedly murdering the city's most wanted criminals. Action thriller, co-starring Hal Holbrook, David Soul, Mitchell Ryan and Robert Urich. Directed by Ted Post (T) (14140654)
11.45 Red Shoe Diaries A man tries to save his doomed marriage (5699741)
12.20am The Pepsi Chart With Steps performing their latest single, *Better Best Forgotten* (9739364)
12.50 The Jack Docherty Show With Kaye Wragg (8926567)
1.30 Live and Dangerous The all-night sports magazine featuring Dutch and Argentine football (67058074)
4.40 Prisoner: Cell Block H Lou vows to take revenge on Mari (7876906)
5.30 100 Per Cent (r) (8477513)

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SATELLITE, CABLE AND DIGITAL

● For further listings see Saturday's *Vision*

SKY ONE

7.00am Count Duckula (45925) 7.30 Chris Evans (33316) 8.30 Hollywood Squares (67012) 9.00 Sally Jessy Raphael (10429) 10.00 Oprah Winfrey (53944) 11.00 Guilty! (73708) 12.00 Jenny Jones (42437) 1.00pm Mad About You (44296) 1.30 Jeopardy (22673) 2.00 Sally Jessy Raphael (35050) 3.00 Jenny Jones (57895) 4.00 Guilty! (36302) 5.00 Star Trek: Voyager (3895) 6.00 America's Dumbest Criminals (6079) 6.30 Dream Team (8431) 7.00 The Simpsons (1296) 7.30 The Simpsons (6215) 8.00 America's Dumbest Criminals (1924) 8.30 World's Weirdest TV (9279) 9.00 Friends (32586) 9.30 ER (93215) 10.30 Veronica's Closet (18055) 11.00 Dream Team (370 31) 11.30 Star Trek: Voyager (83128) 12.30am The Commish (69618) 1.30 Long Play (7203141)

SKY BOX OFFICE

Sky's pay-per-view movie channels.
To view any film telephone 0990 800833
SKY BOX OFFICE 1 (Transponder 51)
Fallen (1998)
SKY BOX OFFICE 2 (Transponder 60)
Amistad (1997)
SKY BOX OFFICE 3 (Transponder 59)
Flubber (1997)
Starship Troopers (1997)
SKY BOX OFFICE 4 (Transponder 55)
Butcher Boy (1997)

SKY PREMIER

6.00am Fly Away Home (1996) [illegible] 8.00 Charlie's Ghost Story (1994) [illegible] 10.00 It Takes Two (1988) (25760) 12.00 The Directors: Robert Wise [illegible] 1.00pm [illegible] 2.00 Fly Away Home (1996) (59741) 4.00 Charlie's Ghost Story (1994) (70944) 5.30 It Takes Two (1988) [illegible] 7.30 [illegible] 8.00 Hollywood Buzz [illegible] 8.30 Selena (1997) [illegible] 10.40 The Accused (1988) [illegible] 12.30am Children of a Lesser God (1986) [illegible] 2.30 Screamers (1995) [illegible] 4.20 The Directors: Robert Wise (673074)

SKY MOVIEMAX

5.25am Destroy All Monsters (1968) [illegible] 7.00 Buck and the Magic Bracelet (1998) [illegible] 9.00 And Baby Makes Six (1979) (46169) 11.00 Snowboard Academy (1997) (71234) 1.00 Buck and the Magic Bracelet (1998) (17654) 3.00 And Baby Makes Six (1979) (87944) 5.00 Challengers (1989) (18019) 7.00 Snowboard Academy (1997) (50857) 9.00 Asunder (1998) (82079) 11.00 Medusa's Child: Part Two (1997) (805418) 12.35am Mother, May I Sleep with Danger (1996) (999567) 2.10 Marie: A True Story (1985) (123384) 4.05 Adrenalin: Fear the Rush (1995) (8274616)

SKY CINEMA

4.00pm A Star is Born (1937) (7965147) 6.00 From the Terrace (1960) (2948892) 8.30 I Married a Monster from Outer Space (1958) (9461215) 10.00 Around the World in 80 Days (1956) (12963895) 12.20am Sudden Impact (1983) (7139074) 2.20 Town on Trial (1956) (2234635) 4.05 The Gallant Hours (1960) (5690619)

FILMFOUR

6.00pm A Feast at Midnight (1994) (11845439) 7.50 The Date (2610789) 8.00 Like Water for Chocolate (1992) (63541383) 9.55 Indulgence (5471963) 10.00 La Grande Bouffe (1973) (31652012) 12.15am Jamon Jamon (1992) (9455513) 1.50 Don't Look Now (1973) (6347529) 3.40 The Shining (1980) (34123155) 6.00 Close

TNT

9.00pm The Philadelphia Story (1940) (53195215) 11.15 To Have and Have Not (1944) (74089437) 1.15am The Fixer (1968) (50261884) 3.30 The Day They Robbed the Bank of England (1960) (22318635) 5.00 Close

SKY SPORTS 1

7.00am Sports Centre 7.15 Wrestling 8.15 You're On Sky Sports! 9.00 Racing News 9.30 Aerobics 10.00 World Pool 11.00 Table Tennis 12.00 Aerobics 12.30pm European Tour Weekly 1.00 Athletics 2.00 World Motor Sport 5.00 Wrestling 6.00 Sports Centre 6.30 League Review 7.00 What A Weekend 7.30 Inside the PGA Tour 8.00 Athletics 9.00 Spanish Football 10.00 Sports Centre 10.15 You're On Sky Sports! 11.00 Trans World Sport 12.00 Sports Centre 12.15am You're On Sky Sports! 1.00 League Review 1.30 What A Weekend 2.00 Spanish Football 3.00 Trans World Sport 4.00 Sports Centre 4.15 Close

SKY SPORTS 2

7.00am Aerobics 7.30 Sports Centre 7.45 Racing News 8.15 Unbelievable Sports 8.45 Sports Centre 9.00 Fish TV 9.30 Golf Extra 12.30pm Rugby League World 2.00 Watersports World 3.00 Table Tennis 4.00 World Pool League 5.00 League Review 6.30 Futbol Mundial 6.00 What A Weekend 6.30 Formula Three 7.00 Trans World Sport 8.00 League Review 8.30 Futbol Mundial 9.00 Live US Golf 11.00 Table Tennis 12.00 Formula Three 12.30am Ice Hockey 3.00 Sports Centre 3.15 Close

SKY SPORTS 3

12.00am Wrestling 1.00pm Fish TV 2.00 FA Cup Final Classics 3.30 Rugby League World 5.00 Survival of the Fittest 5.30 Inside the PGA Tour 6.00 Table Tennis 7.00 Futbol Mundial 7.30 Live Ice Hockey 10.00 Bobby Charlton's Football Scrapbook 11.30 Close

EUROSPORT

7.30am Dog Sled Racing 8.00 Cart 9.30 Ski-Jumping 10.00 Live Ski-Jumping 12.00 Motorcycling 12.30pm Motocross 1.00 Snowboarding 1.30 Snooker 4.00 Ski-Jumping 5.30 Trial 6.30 Racing Line 7.30 Boxing 8.30 Live Football 10.15 Football 11.30 Racing Line 12.30am Close

UK GOLD

7.00am Crossroads 7.30 Neighbours 7.55 EastEnders 8.30 The Bill 9.30 Pride and Prejudice 10.30 Rhoda 11.00 Dallas 11.55 Neighbours 12.25pm EastEnders 1.00 Bugs 2.00 Dallas 2.55 The Bill 3.55 EastEnders 4.30 Rhoda 5.00 All Creatures Great and Small 6.00 Dynasty 7.00 Ever Decreasing Circles 7.40 Dad's Army 8.20 The Brittas Empire 9.00 The Young Ones 9.40 Bottom 10.20 Common as Muck 11.30 The Bill 12.30am Blackadder Goes Forth 1.00 French and Saunders 1.40 Dangerfield 2.45 Screenshop

GRANADA PLUS

6.00am Within These Walls 7.00 Holding the Fort 7.30 Odd Couple 8.00 Hallelujah 8.30 The Many Wives of Patrick 9.00 Classic Coronation Street 9.30 Emmerdale Farm 10.00 Upstairs, Downstairs 11.00 The Gentle Touch 12.00 Classic Coronation Street 12.30pm Emmerdale Farm 1.00 The Many Wives of Patrick 1.30 Me and My Girl 2.00 Upstairs, Downstairs 3.00 The Love Boat 4.00 The Professionals 5.00 Hart To Hart 6.00 Emmerdale Farm 6.30 Classic Coronation Street 7.00 The Professionals 8.00 The Benny Hill Show 9.00 The Sweeney 10.00 Hale and Pace 10.30 Wheeltappers and Shunters' Social Club 11.00 Granada Men and Motors



Robin Williams stars as an inventive professor in Disney's rollercoaster comic adventure *Flubber* (Sky Box Office 3)

CARLTON SELECT

5.00pm What's Cooking? 5.30 Gridlock 6.00 My Two Wives 6.30 Our House 7.00 Shine On, Harvey Moon 8.00 The Carlton London Restaurant Awards 1999 9.00 St Elsewhere 10.00 Tales from the Hollywood Hills 11.00 Hill Street Blues 12.00 My Two Wives 12.30am Gridlock 1.00 Close

DISNEY CHANNEL

6.00am Gummi Bears 6.25 Classic Toons 6.35 Tale Spin 7.00 Classic Toons 7.10 Aladdin 7.35 101 Dalmatians 8.00 Goof Troop 8.25 Classic Toons 8.45 New Winnie the Pooh 9.00 Adventures of Spot 9.05 Animal Shelf 9.15 Pocket Dragons 9.35 Bear in the Big Blue House 9.55 Toothbrush Family 10.00 Bite Size 10.10 Rosie and Jim 10.30 Big Garage 10.45 PB and J Otter 11.00 Sesame Street 12.00 The Adventures of Spot 12.05pm Animal Shelf 12.15 Pocket Dragons 12.30 Bear in the Big Blue House 12.55 Toothbrush Family 1.00 Bite Size 1.10 Rosie and Jim 1.30 Big Garage 1.45 PB and J Otter 2.00 New Winnie the Pooh 2.30 Quack Pack 3.00 Little Mermaid 3.30 Art Attack 4.00 101 Dalmatians 4.30 Hercules: The TV Show 5.00 Recess 5.15 Pepper Ann 5.30 Smart Guy 6.00 Teen Angel 7.00 FILM: The Brave Little Toaster to the Rescue (1997) 8.15 Honey I Shrunk the Kids: The TV Show 9.00 Dinosaurs 10.00 Home Improvement 10.30 The Wonder Years 11.00 Dr Quinn: Medicine Woman 12.00 Close

FOX KIDS NETWORK

6.00am Adventures of Dodo 6.05 Power Rangers Turbo 6.55 Spiderman 7.20 Oggy and the Cockroaches 7.30 Donkey Kong Country 8.00 Hero Turtles: The Next Mutation 8.25 The Incredible Hulk 8.50 Iron Man 9.15 Fantastic Four 9.40 X-Men 10.05 Casper 10.30 Oggy and the Cockroaches 10.55 EekStravaganza 11.05 Bobby's World 11.30 Life with Louie 11.55 Home to Rent 12.05pm Dennis and Gnasher 12.30 Donkey Kong Country 1.00 Mowgli: The New Adventures of Jungle Book 1.25 Ace Ventura 1.55 The Incredible Hulk 2.20 Iron Man 2.45 Fantastic Four 3.10 X-Men 3.30 X-Press 3.35 Spiderman 4.00 Goosebumps 4.25 Hero Turtles The Next Mutation 4.50 Casper 5.00 Dennis and Gnasher 5.30 Ace Ventura 6.00 Donkey Kong Country 6.30 EekStravaganza 6.55 Oggy and the Cockroaches 7.00 Close

NICKELODEON

6.00am Rocko's Modern Life 6.30 Bruno the Kid 7.00 CatDog 7.30 Rugrats 8.00 The Wild Thornberrys 8.30 Arthur 9.00 Children's BBC 10.00 Wimzie's House 10.30 Papa Beaver Stories 11.00 The Magic School Bus 11.30 PB Bear/Budgie the Little Helicopter/Animal Antics/Family Ness 12.00 Rugrats 12.30pm Blue's Clues 1.00 Bananas in Pyjamas 1.30 Little Bear Stories 2.00 Paddington Bear etc 2.30 Children's BBC 3.30 Doug 4.00 Three Friends and Jerry 4.30 Rugrats 5.00 Sister Sister 5.30 Kenan and Kel 6.00 Renford Rejects 6.30 Moesha 7.00 Close

BRAVO

8.00pm Martial Law 9.00 Extreme Championship Wrestling 9.30 Cops 10.00 The Late Lounge 10.30 Erotic Confessions 11.00 FILM: The Thomas Crown Affair (1968) 1.00am Erotic Confessions 1.30 The Late Lounge 2.00 Martial Law 3.00 FILM: Adventures of a Plumber's Mate (1978) 5.00 Extreme Championship Wrestling 5.30 Cops 6.00 Close

PARAMOUNT COMEDY

7.00pm Jenny 7.30 Grace Under Fire 8.00 Ellen 8.30 Spin City 9.00 Drop the Dead Donkey 9.30 Whose Line Is It Anyway? 10.00 Frasier 10.30 Cheers 11.00 Seinfeld 11.30 The Larry Sanders Show 12.00 Late Night with David Letterman 1.00am Taxi 1.30 Frontline 2.00 Dr Katz 2.30 Tibs and Fibs 3.00 Nightstand 3.30 Abbott and Costello 4.00 Close

THE SCI-FI CHANNEL

SATELLITE: 8pm-MIDNIGHT ONLY

7.30am Bloomberg Information Television 8.00 Sightings Special 9.00 Buck Rogers in the 25th Century 10.00 Quantum Leap 11.00 Dark Shadows 11.30 The Ray Bradbury Theatre 12.00 The Twilight Zone 1.00pm Tales of the Unexpected 1.30 Tales of the Unexpected 2.00 Amazing Stories 2.30 Mysteries, Magic and Miracles 3.00 Buck Rogers in the 25th Century 4.00 The Incredible Hulk 5.00 Sightings Special 6.00 Time Trax 7.00 Quantum Leap 8.00 PSI Factor: Chronicles of the Paranormal 9.00 Babylon 5 10.00 FILM: Sleeping Dogs (1997) 12.00 Twin Peaks 1.00am FILM: Paint Me a Murder (1984) 2.30 The Twilight Zone 3.00 Dark Shadows 3.30 Dark Shadows 4.00 Close

HOME & LEISURE

6.00am Today's Gourmet 6.30 Yan Can Cook — The Best of Asia 7.00 Homemaker 7.30 Period Rooms 8.00 Wedding Story 8.30 A Baby Story 9.00 Simply Painting 9.30 The Great Gardening Plot 10.00 Instant Gardens 10.30 Two's Country Cooking 11.00 The Diceman 11.25 The Home and Leisure House 11.30 Rex Hunt Fishing Adventures 12.00 Our House Down Under 12.30pm Antiques Trail 1.00 Our House 1.30 Home Savvy 2.00 New Yankee Workshop 2.30 Home Again with Bob Vila 3.00 This Old House with Steve and Norm 3.30 Charlie West Fishing

DISCOVERY

4.00pm Rex Hunt Fishing Adventures 4.30 The Car Show 5.00 Hitler 6.00 Wildlife SOS 6.30 Untamed Africa 7.30 Futureworld 8.00 Discover Magazine 9.00 Science Frontiers 10.00 Hoover Dam 11.00 Forensic Detectives 12.00 The Great Egyptians 1.00am Hitler 2.00 Close

ANIMAL PLANET

12.00am The New Adventures of Black Beauty 12.30pm Hollywood Safari 1.30 Crocodile Hunter 2.00 Wildlife ER 2.30 Human/Nature 3.30 Harry's Practice 4.00 Jack Hanna's Animal Adventures 4.30 Animal Doctor 5.00 Pet Rescue 5.30 Crocodile Hunter 6.00 New Adventures of Black Beauty 6.30 Lassie 7.00 Rediscovery of the World 8.00 Animal Doctor 8.30 Cousins Beneath the Skin 9.30 Emergency Vets 10.00 Deadly Australians 10.30 The Big Animal Show 11.00 Wild Rescues 11.30 Emergency Vets 12.00 Close

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

7.00pm Scarlet Skies 7.30 Killer Whales of the Fjord 8.00 In the Land of the Grizzlies 9.00 Extreme Earth: Land of Fire and Ice 9.30 Extreme Earth: Liquid Earth 10.00 Mystery of the Inca Mummy 10.30 Maya Mysteries 11.00 Reef at Ras Mohammed 12.00 Ocean Worlds: Sex on the Reef

HISTORY

4.00pm Vietnam: Frontline America 5.00 Tanks 6.00 Inca: Secrets of Ancestors 7.00 Charlton Heston

CARLTON FOOD

9.00am Food Network Daily 9.30 Coxon's Kitchen College 10.00 Chef for a Day 10.30 First Taste 11.00 Worrall Thompson Cooks 11.30 A Slice of the Action 12.00 Food Network Daily 12.30pm Food Factory 1.00 Coxon's Kitchen College 1.30 The Green Gourmet 2.00 The Cookshop 2.30 Food Network Daily 3.00 Scotland's Larder 3.30 A Slice of the Action 4.00 From the Ground Up 4.30 Indian Kitchen 5.00 Close

LIVING

6.00am Tiny and Crew 6.20 Ten Plus Two 6.40 Philbert the Frog 6.45 Greedysaurus and the Gang 6.50 Polka Dot Shorts 7.00 Practical Parenting 7.05 Professor Bubble 7.30 Caillou 7.35 Bug Alert 7.55 Practical Parenting 8.00 Barney and Friends 8.25 Babaloos 8.30 Tiny Tales 8.35 Tiny and Crew 8.50 Practical Parenting 9.00 Special Babies 9.30 The Roseanne Show 10.00 The Jerry Springer Show 10.50 Maury Povich 11.40 Brookside 12.10pm Through the Keyhole 12.40 Rescue 911 1.10 Beyond Belief: Fact or Fiction 1.40 Maury Povich 2.30 Special Babies 3.00 Living Room 3.50 Michael Cole 4.40 Through the Keyhole 5.10 The Heat Is On 5.40 Ready, Steady, Cook 6.15 The Jerry Springer Show 7.05 Rescue 911 7.35 Animal Rescue 8.00 Adrenalin Junkies 9.00 FILM: Love in Another Town (TVM 1997) 10.00 LA Law 11.00 The Sex Files II 12.00 Close

ZEE TV

5.00am Hatya Tere Ghar Vasya 5.30 Hit Thi Hit Hai 6.00 Hero Kal Aaj Au 6.30 Awaz Nayee Andaz Wohl 7.00 Faith: Saibaba 7.30 News 8.00 Karobar Duniya 8.30 Tara 9.00 Zanjeeren 9.30 Zee Health Show 10.00 Kaun Sa Rishta 11.00 Pot Luck 11.30 Parampara 12.00 FILM 3.00pm Bangla TV: Nakhatrer Rat 3.30 Public Demand 4.00 Akbar Birbal 4.30 Fairdeal Antakshari 5.30 Teacher 6.00 Pop Time 6.30 Hip Hip Hurray 7.00 Gudgudee 7.30 Cinemagic 8.00 News 8.30 Chahat Aur Nafrat 9.00 Hasratein 9.30 Blunt 2 10.30 X-Zone 11.00 Majuhe Chaand Chahiye 12.00 News 12.30am Zee Business Show 1.00 Zee Bangla 1.30 Reshat 2.00 FILM: Hindi Movie 4.30 Tamil: An Hour With



ATHLETICS 48
Radcliffe returns to Balmoral in defence of her five-mile title

SPORT

RUGBY UNION 51
Villepreux tries to make light of clash against England



Vialli warms to Valerenga task

Chelsea seek more than cold comfort

FROM KEVIN McCARRA IN OSLO

IT IS a peculiar kind of winter break that sees men seeking out cold instead of chasing the sun. Nonetheless, as they landed in Oslo, there was satisfaction for Chelsea in the sight of the banks of snow that had been cleared from the runways. This is a club in need of a change of scene after the defeats by Manchester United in the FA Cup and West Ham United in the FA Carling Premiership.

VALERENGA v CHELSEA

The trip to a bracingly chilly Oslo could be refreshing in itself, but Chelsea will be glad, above all, of another spell in the lenient land of the Cup Winners' Cup. After a 3-0 win for Gianluca Vialli's team in the first leg at Stamford Bridge, the tie with Valerenga is already over. The holders will face their first severe test in the semi-finals, in which, in all probability, they will meet Lazio, Lokomotiv Moscow or Real Mallorca.

Only the margin of victory over Valerenga remains to be debated and Vialli, the player-manager, addressed more far-reaching concerns yesterday. He is heartened by the emphatic form shown by Graeme Le Saux since apparent provocation by Robbie Fowler led him to appear to strike the Liverpool forward three weeks ago. "When the pressure is on you can get down about it or you can get a boost from the fact that everyone is looking at you, as Graeme has done," Vialli said.

Le Saux and Fowler should be named today in the England squad for the match against Poland, but a date for the FA hearing on their misconduct charges is still to be set. "The longer it takes, the better," Vialli said, "because in two or three weeks no one will remember it." He trusts, in particular, that his left back can master the art of forgetting.

"I hope that Graeme doesn't think in the future that it would be better for him to move abroad," Vialli said. "I hope he sticks with English football and doesn't get fed up with the situation around him." Another step towards retaining the Cup Winners' Cup should remind Le Saux of the advantages of staying precisely where he is.

Decisions about this trip laid bare Vialli's attitude to it. Marcel Desailly and Frank Leboeuf, the centre backs, were not in the party, but Vialli could hardly pretend that the pair were gravely injured when they are virtually certain to be in action at the weekend. "If this had been the final they would both be with us," he said. "We have an important match at Aston Villa on Sunday and I did not want to risk them."

The weather is far less hostile than that encountered by Chelsea in Tromso last season, but these are still not the conditions for men such as Desailly and Leboeuf to expose their aches and pains, even if undersoil heating at the Ullevaal Stadium will give the players a sure surface.

With the Norwegian season yet to begin, Valerenga remain at a disadvantage despite being managed by Egil Olsen, whose method of direct play is dreaded even more than it is denounced. John Carew, the powerful centre forward, is the prime threat.

Ginola on target 50
Venables owed £2m 50
Atlético halt Italians 50

Vialli: taking no risks



Flo: may be omitted

Chelsea, for their own sake, wish to excel. Over the past week, with the departure from the FA Cup and the harm done to their prospects of winning the Premiership, a little hope has seeped out of them. "We need a bit more determination in both boxes, when we have the chance to score and when we are having to defend to get a result," Vialli said.

It is the claiming of goals that is the greater problem. Since the victory over Valerenga a fortnight ago, Chelsea have not scored in three matches. They are more dependent than they would wish on Tore Andre Flo, who has not scored since December 26. Injury has taken up much of the intervening period and, after a comeback at the end of last month, sharpness has been just out of reach.

Flo, with the distraction of imminent fatherhood at the end of this month, may be left out this evening as Vialli presses himself into service. The match itself should be a lull before the season enters that phase in which high promise teeters on the edge of failure.

CHELSEA (possible, 4-4-2): E De Goey — A Ferrer, M Duberry, B Lambourde, G Le Saux — D Petrescu, J Morris, D Wise, C Babayaro — G Vialli, G Zola.

VALERENGA (possible, 4-5-1): M Kaven — T Bernsen, K Haraldsen, F Kjolner, H Tran — K Kaasa, J Walltin, B Levernes, D Riisnaes, T Hovi — J Carew

Referee: A Amcoon (Belgium)

TELEVISION: Channel 5, from 7pm.

Looks Like Trouble, ridden by Paul Carberry, clears the last fence in copybook style before galloping away up the hill to win the the Royal & Sun Alliance Chase by a distance on another day of glorious sunshine at Cheltenham. Photograph: Julian Herbert/Allsport

McCoy banned again

BY ALAN LEE
RACING CORRESPONDENT

TONY McCoy, the champion National Hunt jockey, who rides Unsinkable Boxer in the Tote Gold Cup today, was banned for four days by the Cheltenham stewards yesterday for incorrect use of the whip as he drove Majadou to a 16-length victory in the Mildmay of Flete Challenge Cup.

McCoy, who had picked up a two-day suspension for misuse of the whip at Taunton on Monday, will be out of action on all racing days from March 24-30. He was referred to the Jockey Club last November when the disciplinary committee imposed an 18-day ban, of which four were deferred. In January, he was again found in breach of whip rules, bringing the deferred part of the suspension into effect.

McCoy has now totted up a further eight days of bans since his last appearance before the disciplinary committee and this will trigger a second trip to Portman Square.

Richard Dunwoody has always longed to ride another horse to lift spirits and rule dreams in his native Ireland. He seeks it as a fitting climax to a majestic career and today, aged 35 and with a right arm that refuses to heal, he has his chance.

If Florida Pearl justifies the floods of Irish money that have established him as 2-1 favourite for a compelling Gold Cup, Dunwoody will be deified in his homeland. For that to happen, though, horse and jockey must overcome the most competitive field in years.

Dunwoody, who still needs daily physiotherapy, speaks passionately of the Irish lust for equine heroes and he knows Florida Pearl has the credentials for the role. But in a race that has captured public imagination like no Gold Cup since Desert Orchid won, ten years ago, there are many alternative winners.

Rob Hartnett, spokesman for the Tote, calls it "the most eagerly awaited race in years" and reports that his firm alone has already taken more than £400,000 in ante-post bets. The horse that would be the Tote's biggest loser is the hope of Herefordshire, Teeton Mill.

There is also at least one more potential Irish winner, Dorans Pride, third in the last two runnings. Imperial Call, winner in 1996, and last year's hero, Cool Dawn, have both been withdrawn as has Earth Summit, winner of the Grand National last April.

Gold Cup preview, page 52
Simon Barnes, page 53

Hide believes Lewis result was fair

BY SRIKUMAR SEN, BOXING CORRESPONDENT

HERBIE HIDE, the World Boxing Organisation (WBO) heavyweight champion, yesterday issued a challenge to Lennox Lewis, the World Boxing Council (WBC) champion, to face him for the two belts.

Hide, who had called a press conference to publicise his bout against Orlin Norris at the Albert Hall on April 3, did not think the New York contest between Lewis and Evander Holyfield was controversial. Lewis did not impress him. "I think the fight was a draw," Hide said. "Holyfield looked 36 going on 80 years old. I don't think any of them deserved to win because none of them tried that hard and were appalling.

"Lewis didn't know he was fighting a shadow of a man. Holyfield was shot. People should be blaming Lewis: why didn't he knock him out? He didn't deserve to win because he lost his bottle."

Frank Warren, Hide's promoter, believed Hide was capable of beating Lewis and that they should meet after Lewis had won his rematch with Holyfield. "That fight could go on in the UK and fill up a football stadium," he said. "For anyone to be declared the undisputed champion of the world he must hold four belts."

Warren said that neutral judges could solve the problems of controversial decisions. "I wouldn't say she [the woman judge in the Lewis bout] should be shot, because I speak from experience that that is painful, but she did not do a proper job," he said.

"I'm against women judging fights. Officials should be neutral but should not come from the continents where the boxers are from." Warren said he would be asking for neutral judges for the contest at the Albert Hall.



Hide: not impressed

The New York State Attorney General's office has asked Larry O'Connell, the English judge who scored the Lewis-Holyfield contest a draw, to fly to America tomorrow to answer questions about the bout. The British Boxing Board of Control has informed them that O'Connell will not be present because of business pressures. John Morris, the board secretary, has asked the State Attorney to fax the questions and, if required, O'Connell will answer them in an affidavit.

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD

No 1668

ACROSS
1 Manner of speaking (8)
5 Light (eg hair): fine (weather) (4)
9 Tall (5)
10 Heavy (eg responsibility) (7)
11 Frame (of car) (7)
12 Given nothing to eat (5)
13 *Non-indulgent promotion of welfare* (5,4)
18 Longest Iberian river (5)
20 Harvesting the sea (7)
22 Condition (attached) (7)
23 Thick-skinned beast (5)
24 Twilight (4)
25 Belief: side (table) (8)

DOWN
1 Principle of action: insurance document (6)
2 Bend (light-ray) (7)
3 Bottomless pit (5)
4 (MP) change sides (5,3,5)
6 Cold and distant (5)
7 Dwell (6)
8 *Gas-cooker setting scale* (6)
14 (Remark) kept to oneself (6)
15 Omission of vowel (7)
16 Unintelligent (6)
17 Pay no attention to (6)
19 Sheen: comment in margin (5)
21 A scrap: cut into tiny bits (5)

SOLUTION TO NO 1667
ACROSS: 1 Verbal 4 Bleed 8 Sound 9 Penguin 10 Brioche 11 Defy 12 Dew 14 Exert 15 Ogled 18 Ego 20 Junk 22 Asks out 24 Martinu 25 Drown 26 Style 27 Gyrate
DOWN: 1 Visible 2 Routine 3 Abdicate 4 Band 5 Elude 6 Dingy 7 Speed 13 Workaday 16 Leonora 17 Detente 19 Oakum 20 James 21 Nervy 23 Cite